

THE  
GROUNDS OF SECESSION

FROM THE

M. E. CHURCH,

OR,

BOOK FOR THE TIMES:

BEING AN

EXAMINATION OF HER CONNECTION WITH SLAVERY,  
AND ALSO OF HER FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

BY REV. O. SCOTT.

REVISED AND CORRECTED.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

WESLEY UPON SLAVERY.

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## INTRODUCTORY.

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IN issuing a new edition of this able work, the publisher feels prompted to say, that he regards this compilation as one of the most important, and truth-telling documents that is extant upon the subjects here treated. It is an honor to the memory of the author. And though he did not claim originality in the chief matter of the work, still, the care and judgment displayed in bringing such a mass of facts within so small a compass, was scarcely less honorable to his talents, than to have originated the whole contents of the work. A large edition has been sold in tract form, and the demand for it is so great, that it is now stereotyped, and put in a form more in correspondence with its merits. To make this work what it professes to be, a BOOK FOR THE TIMES, the masterly tract of Mr. Wesley upon Slavery is appended, which gives a finish to it that will command an extensive patronage.

*March, 1849*

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THE  
G R O U N D S   O F   S E C E S S I O N  
FROM THE  
M . E . C H U R C H .

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WITHDRAWAL OF JOTHAM HORTON, ORANGE  
SCOTT, AND LAROE SUNDERLAND.

WITH the date of this communication closes our connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church. We take this step after years of consideration, and with a solemn sense of our responsibility to God—we take it with a view to his glory and the salvation of souls.

Twenty years and upwards of the best part of our lives have been spent in the service of this church—during which time we have formed acquaintances which have endeared to our hearts multitudes of Christian friends. Many of these are true kindred spirits, and we leave them with reluctance. But the view we take of our responsibility is not local in its bearings, nor limited in its duration. While we live, and when we die, we wish to bear a testimony which shall run parallel with coming ages; nay, with the annals of eternity. Many considerations of friend-

ship as well as our temporal interests, bind us to the church of our early choice. But for the sake of a high and holy cause, we *can* forego all these. We wish to live not for ourselves, nor for the present age alone, but for all coming time; nay, for *God and eternity*. We have borne our testimony a long time against what we considered wrong in the M. E. Church. We have waited, prayed, and hoped, until there is no longer any ground for hope. Hence we have come to the deliberate conclusion that we must submit to things as they are, or peaceably retire. We have unhesitatingly chosen the latter.

It is, however, proper, in leaving the church, to assign our reasons. These are mainly, the following:

1. The M. E. Church is not only a slave-holding, but a *slavery defending church*.

2. The Government of the M. E. Church contains principles not laid down in the Scriptures, nor recognized in the usages of the primitive church—principles which are subversive of the rights, both of ministers and laymen.

That the M. E. Church is a slaveholding church, none will deny. She allows her members and ministers *unrebuked*, to hold innocent human beings in a state of hopeless bondage—nay, more, she upholds and defends her communicants in this abominable business! All her disciplinary regulations which present a *show* of opposition to slavery are known and acknowledged to be a



dead letter in the South. And they are as dead in the North as in the South. Even the general rule has been altered, either through carelessness or design, so as to favor the internal slave trade; and yet the last General Conference REFUSED to correct the error, *knowing it to be such!*

This church has defended, in a labored argument, through some of her best ministers, the *present rightful relation of master and slave*—in that she has never called them to account for putting forth such a document.

She has exhorted, through her regularly constituted agents and highest officers, the trustees of Methodist churches to close their pulpits against Methodist anti-slavery lecturers.

She has refused, in numerous instances, through her bishops, to entertain, in the annual conferences, motions expressive of the sinfulness of slave-holding—motions for the appointment of committees on slavery—motions for the adoption of reports on slavery; and that, because those motions and reports contained the sentiment, that *slaveholding is sin*—which, it was alleged, is contrary to Methodism, which recognizes and approves of the relation of master and slave under some circumstances.

She has refused, through her bishops, to *hear* the prayers of scores and hundreds of her members *against* slavery, in some of the annual conferences:

She has refused to publish, in her official pa-

pers, several addresses of the British Wesleyan Conference, because they alluded to slavery.

She has arraigned and condemned, without the forms of trial, members of her highest ecclesiastical assembly, for simply attending and speaking in an anti-slavery meeting.

She has condemned modern abolition, refusing at the same time to say, in the language of the discipline, that she is as "much as ever convinced of the great evil of slavery."

She has exhorted her ministers and members throughout the country "wholly to refrain" from this agitating subject.

She has said, through some of her annual conferences, that slavery is not a moral evil—while she has repeatedly refused, through her bishops, to allow other annual conferences to express the opposite sentiment.

She has allowed without censure, one of her bishops to issue a labored address, in which an attempt is made to prove that slave-holding is not only justified, but enjoined under some circumstances, by the Golden Rule! and she has published this address in her official papers.

She has, through her ministers and members, disfranchised and censured or expelled, class-leaders, stewards, exhorters, and local preachers, for the simple crime of their abolition movements.

She has, through some of her annual conferences, prohibited her ministers and preachers from patronizing anti-slavery papers.

She has refused to receive into some of her annual conferences, pious and talented young men on trial, for the simple reason, that they were *active* abolitionists.

She has, through the same medium, arraigned, censured, suspended, and in some instances expelled her ministers, for contumacy and insubordination with respect to abolition;—and some of these she has followed from year to year, by her bishops and members of other conferences for the evident purpose of destroying their ministerial character and influence;—subjecting them to repeated, vexatious and expensive trials.

She has two or three times altered her discipline to effect, as is believed, their expulsion.

She has removed Presiding Elders from their districts for their abolition movements; suffering, as it would seem, *this crime* to effect the appointment of other ministers and preachers.

She has refused, in her General Conference capacity, to re-affirm her former language of opposition to slavery, though requested to do this by some thousands of her ministers and members. She has refused, in the same capacity, to take exceptions to the sentiment of two or three annual conferences, who have said that slavery is not a moral evil.

And finally, she has adopted a resolution on colored testimony, which disfranchises *eighty thousand of her members*—thus giving the weight of her influence to that slaveholding legislation which,

in a civil point of view, disfranchises millions of our fellow countrymen.

Add to this, the fact that all her official papers, are so much under the influence of slaveholding, that no abolitionist can be heard on the subject of slavery and abolition, however he may be abused, traduced and misrepresented.

In view of these facts we ask, is not the M. E. Church one of the main supporters of slavery in this country? Has she not defended it in almost every conceivable way? And is there any prospect that this church will ever be reformed, so long as slavery exists in the country? If not, can we obey the commands of God, and continue in fellowship with a church which receives, shields, and defends, thousands and tens of thousands, who, according to Mr. Wesley, are "exactly on a level with men-stealers?" If a large portion of our ministers and members were sheep-stealers or horse-stealers, there would be more propriety in covering them;—but when we consider that they make merchandize of the souls and bodies of *men*, or do that which is tantamount to such a traffic, without rebuke,—how can we co-operate with them in the great work of reforming the world? Others must judge for themselves, but we feel it our duty to "come out of her"—to "have no fellowship" or connection "with the unfruitful works of darkness," but to "come out from among them and be separate!" By this course we solemnly believe, we can do more for

the cause of the bleeding slave, than by continuing in a SLAVERY-DEFENDING church, when there *can* be no hope of reforming her till the country is reformed. But,

2dly, The Government of the M. E. Church contains principles not laid down in the Scriptures, nor recognized in the usages of the primitive church—principles which are subversive of the rights both of ministers and laymen.

While we admit that no *form* of church government is laid down in the Scriptures, we contend that *principles* are laid down which are in direct contravention with some of the existing forms.

That the Roman Catholic is of this class, all will admit. The claims of the high churchmen are believed to be equally unfounded. And though the objectionable features in the M. E. form of church government are less wide of the mark, yet they are as *truly* unauthorized as anything in either of the above mentioned forms. Both Scripture and primitive usage recognize Christians in the light of one great brotherhood—possessing essentially the same rights, subject only to one master. True, pastors and people, have their peculiar and distinctive duties, but there is to be no “*lording it over God’s heritage.*”

From the Scriptures it is evident, that even in the times of the apostles, laymen were members of the highest councils of the church, and Lord King clearly proves that this was the usage of the Christian church for several ages. It follows,

therefore, that the contrary practice is not only without Scripture and usage, but contrary thereto. That separation between ministers and laymen which exists in the M. E. church, owes its origin to the assumptions of Rome! It exists, we believe, in no other church. Even the Episcopalian church in this country cannot elect a bishop *without the concurrence of a board of laymen!*

The power which our bishops claim and exercise in the annual conferences is contrary to the plainest principles of Christian responsibility. All religious associations must, in the nature of things, have the right to express, without restraint, their opinions on any moral question. But this no annual or quarterly conference in the M. E. church can do without the consent of the bishop or presiding elder. But no body of Christian men has any more right to submit to such restraints, than they have to commit the entire keeping of their consciences to other hands. That holy men of God should consent, in this enlightened age, to exercise such power over the consciences of their brethren, is truly astonishing! but not more so than that ministers can be found who will peaceably submit to such innovations upon their responsibilities to God!!

Scarcely less objectionable, is the power conferred upon the bishops of the M. E. church, in the appointment of the preachers. That the entire destinies of three or four thousand men should be in the hands of some five or six bishops, so far

as their fields of labor are concerned, seems to be forbidden by the fact that these bishops are fallible men—that they are often ignorant both of the preachers and people; and that they cannot control the openings of Providence, and the calls of God. We know the presiding elders are usually called upon for advice in this matter; but there is no OBLIGATION on the part of the Episcopacy to advise with any one. And when all must admit that it would be dangerous for the bishops to exercise the power they possess, what advantage can there be in their possessing such power? If it be wrong to rob our fellow-creatures, how *can* it be right to possess the *legal power* to do this? But that the bishops will ever be curtailed in their prerogatives, in this respect, there is not the least ground of hope, when it is considered, that after those in the general conference who were in favor of some reform in this respect, had toiled for *thirty* years, namely, from 1790 to 1820, and when, having finally succeeded in carrying a small compromise measure, by a vote of more than two-thirds of the general conference, the whole measure was defeated by the minority, including two bishops—though one was but a bishop elect. This measure only provided that when presiding elders were wanted, the bishop should nominate three times the number wanted, out of whom the conference should elect the requisite number:—and the presiding elders thus constituted, were to be made an *advisory* council in stationing the

preachers. This was not what a large portion of the general conference wanted, but what they consented to take, as a compromise measure. But Episcopacy would not be curtailed in this respect. And yet some of our friends talk about reforming the church in her government. Impossible! This can never be done. History and facts are all against the indulgence of such a hope. Could we see the most distant prospect of any material change for the better, we would wait and patiently labor. We say now, as we have often said, that reform and not revolution, is our wish. But no important church reform ever yet took place *in the entire body*, though by secessions, the monster, power, has been checked in his progressive career. What would the state of the world now have been, with respect to popery, had it not been for Luther and the Reformation? Who can tell to what lengths tyranny would have been carried ere this, had there been no opposition? no secession?

If the presiding elders were a legal council to station the preachers, the case would be bettered but little, in some respects at least, inasmuch as they are created by the bishop alone, and entirely dependent on him for their office. They, therefore, would be mere echoes of his will.

Connected with this unrestricted stationing authority, which the bishop possesses, is the power to transfer preachers to any part of the United States, to Texas, or to Africa—and that too, not



only without their consent, but *against their will* ! Thus, for instance, for the simple crime of abolition, a brother may be placed by the bishop where, in all probability, he would be put either out of the church, or out of the world. For, he may be transferred to a southern conference, to which, if he does not go, he would lose his membership in the church ; and where, if he does go, he would be *liable* to lose his head. It is not enough, to say, in reply to this, that there is no probability that this power will ever be exercised, because its exercise would be wrong ; for how can it be right to *possess* this power, if it would be wrong to exercise it ?

Another serious objection to Methodist Episcopacy, is the election of bishops for life. Once a bishop, always a bishop, however incapacitated to the performance of the duties of the office from bodily or mental infirmities.

We will mention but one thing more. And that is, that feature in the economy of the M. E. church, which gives the power to the preacher of excluding almost any member *he* may wish to get rid of. True, the Discipline requires the forms of trial, in case of expulsion ; but as the preacher has the sole power to appoint the committee, and that without giving the accused any right of challenge, it is not, in general, difficult, for a preacher to punish whom he pleases, and that for trifling causes, as many can testify. And as he has the sole right to appoint all the leaders and nominate

all the stewards, it is of but little consequence for an expelled member to appeal to a quarterly meeting conference, if the preacher is known to be strongly prejudiced against him—however unfounded that prejudice may be.

Such, in brief, are some of our reasons for leaving the Methodist *Episcopal* Church.

We wish it to be distinctly understood, that we do not withdraw from any thing essential to *pure Wesleyan Methodism*. We only dissolve our connection with Episcopacy and Slavery. These we believe to be anti-scriptural, and well calculated to sustain each other.

There are many valuable things in the economy of Methodism; these we shall still adhere to. And this we *can* do without having any connection with what is worse than objectionable. We know it will be said, God has greatly blessed the church, and is evidently still owning her, and therefore we ought not to disturb her peace by any discussions of her polity. The same remark may be made in regard to slavery. And yet who will pretend either that slavery is right because God has so wonderfully blessed the church, or that for this reason we should refrain from agitating her with discussions on the subject? We ask *who*? for we all know that *anti*-abolitionists *have* used this very argument. Abolitionists, however, have considered it unsound. Let them, then, be careful how they take precisely the same ground in relation to another matter. True, God

has blessed us ; but this is not perhaps so much owing to our slavery and Episcopacy, as to the evangelical character of our doctrines and our zeal. And let us not forget that he has blessed other churches too.

Should it be said that God has frowned upon all who have left the church—it might be replied, in the first place, that this is not the fact. Some of the secessions from the church are prospering as well, in proportion to their means, as the M. E. church. And secondly, if it were true, it would not prove that the *act* of their leaving the church was displeasing to God—much less would it prove that no circumstances *can* exist which will make a secession justifiable.

Though we entertain none other but kind feelings towards those we leave, yet we expect to be ill-treated by our former friends. We know how it has been with others who have left. To lose ministers and members is a mortification to sectarian pride. Those who will *defend* the church and her usages, are fine fellows ; but the moment they leave her communion, no reproachful epithets are too bad to heap upon them. Their motives are impugned, and their honesty questioned. And this, for effect, is sometimes done in *advance* ! But we have counted the cost, and are prepared to suffer persecution. By whatever spirit some of our opponents may be actuated, we hope to be saved from all unkind expressions.

Though but three of us sign this document,

scores, if not hundreds, to our certain knowledge, might have easily been obtained. We did not wish any other names *now*. There will be an opportunity for all who may desire it, to follow our example. We shall not be disappointed if but few do this. We have no anxiety on this ground. We act for ourselves. Knowing, however, that there are hundreds, if not thousands, who entertain the same sentiments we do, we have prepared an outline of discipline or plan of operation—a summary of which will be given in the paper containing this withdrawal. The entire plan will soon be published. It will be seen from the summary, that we have made provision to organize churches, if there is a call for it.

And now, dear brethren of the M. E. church, we bid you FAREWELL. Many of you we know and love. And while we do not impeach your motives or honesty, we hope in turn you will not treat us as barbarians. There is room enough for us all. Let us have no *unchristian* contention.

JOTHAM HORTON,

ORANGE SCOTT,

LARoy SUNDERLAND.

*Providence, R. I. Nov. 8, 1842.*

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### WITHDRAWAL OF REV. LUTHER LEE.

By this article, and from its date, I withdraw from the Methodist Episcopal Church. I have been a member of her communion more than

twenty-one years, rising of sixteen of which have been spent in the ministry, with what success others must judge, subject to the corrections of the last judgment in the light of eternity.

The first and leading cause which has forced my mind to this conclusion, is the relation which the church sustains to slavery.

1. There is no rule in the Discipline of the church prohibiting the private members of the church holding slaves ; but, on the contrary, the legislation of the church supposes that they do and will continue to hold slaves. It is said, in the section concerning slavery, " All our preachers shall *prudently* enforce upon *our members* the necessity of teaching *their slaves* to read the word of God." This every one knows must be a dead letter, as the laws of the slaveholding States forbid the teaching of slaves to read, while it proves that " our members " do and are expected to hold slaves.

2. The church has made herself responsible for the existence of slavery, by silently passing over the acts, without reproof, of those ministers and conferences which have openly and shamelessly justified slavery as a system. I will give but two of these instances out of many.

The following is from an address delivered before several conferences by Bishop Hedding :—

" The right to hold a slave is founded on this rule, ' Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would

that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets.'”

The Georgia Conference passed the following resolution :—

“ *Resolved*, That slavery, as it exists in the United States, is not a moral evil.”

The South Carolina Conference passed a resolution of similar import.

There is then but one question to settle, and that is, Is the Methodist Episcopal Church responsible for these sentiments ? That slavery has been sanctioned by individual ministers and constitutional bodies of the church, has been clearly shown ; but has the church so endorsed these proceedings as to make herself responsible for them ? It is clear to me that she has.

(1.) These persons have never been dealt with for these sentiments, as persons have who have held and advanced other erroneous and wicked doctrines.

(2.) The Bishops have never remonstrated against the course of those conferences which have neglected to call these advocates of slavery to an account ; nor have they even attempted to transfer these men to other conferences to be dealt with, which they claim the power and right to do ; but, on the other hand, they put the resolutions by which the conferences pronounced slavery to be right, which they claim not to be legally bound to put, and for the sentiments of which resolutions they say they are responsible to the General Con-

ference. When they have been urged to put abolition resolutions, they have declined, on the ground that they were responsible to the General Conference for the resolutions they put;—and hence they must be responsible for pro-slavery resolutions.

(3.) The General Conference has never remonstrated against the neglect of the annual conferences to bring these advocates of slavery to an account, nor ordered the Bishops to transfer them to other conferences to be dealt with, which it has power to do; nor has it condemned the proceedings of those conferences in adopting pro-slavery resolutions, notwithstanding the minutes of the same have been before it for examination; nor has the General Conference censured the Bishops for putting those resolutions.

(4.) While the General Conference has suffered her ministers and annual conferences to advocate slavery, without a single rebuke, she has condemned modern abolitionism, and condemned ministers for holding and acting out the principles of abolition, and, at the bidding of slaveholders, has passed a resolution denying the oppressed colored members of the church, in the slaveholding States, the right of testifying to the truth in a church trial involving the character of the pale-faced oppressor.

These facts, taken together, clearly make the church responsible for slavery.

I think it has now been shown, beyond the

possibility of a doubt in the minds of such as look at the subject without prejudice, that the M. E. Church has committed herself to slavery, so as to make herself responsible for its existence. I will not dwell upon the great wickedness of slavery, but rely upon the public sense of justice on this point. And the simple fact that the church is slaveocratic in her principles, feelings, and administration, is in my view a sufficient reason for the dissolution of the connection I have so long held with her.

II. A second reason which has operated strongly upon my mind, forcing me to the conclusion that I ought to withdraw from the church, is found in the principles of her government, especially as they have been developed in the administration since the commencement of the anti-slavery discussion. I have always known that the government of the church was aristocratical in its form and principles, and the greatest "logical wonders" with which I have ever met, have been some few efforts to prove that it is republican or democratic. I know that no church, nor any class of persons in a church, has or can have a right to legislate contrary to the laws of Christ; but there are many prudential rules which may be enacted to suit times and circumstances; and that the body of the laity should have no voice in making these rules, even such of them as more immediately concern themselves, I have always viewed as extremely arbitrary in principle: and that every con-



gregation throughout the denomination should be dependent, absolutely so, on the will of an individual for the man who shall preach to them the word of life ; and that every minister in the connection should be absolutely dependent upon the judgment or will of one man, for his field of labor, who has power to say whether he shall labor in the sigh-burdened rice swamps of the South, along the shores of the distant Sabine, or in the North, by the cold waters of the St. Lawrence, I never did believe liberal in principle. But I formerly looked upon these arbitrary principles as existing only in form, and my reply has always been, when attacked on the ground of the arbitrary character of our church polity, that there was no oppression in fact,—that though the government was arbitrary in principle, yet the piety, good sense and kind feelings of the bishops and preachers, secured a liberal administration. But I can no longer silence the arguments of others, or the voice of my own judgment, with this plea ;—an occasion has arisen, these arbitrary principles have been roused from their slumber, this lion of power has roared and leaped from his lair in vindication, not only of his own claims, but also in vindication of slavery itself. The anti-slavery discussion has been the occasion, and in opposition to this, I have seen persons expelled from the church because they were abolitionists ; I have seen class-leaders put out of office because they would open their mouths for the dumb ; I have

seen preachers suspended and silenced, because they would plead for the oppressed slave ; I have seen congregations denied the minister they desired, while others who were not suspected of the crime of modern abolitionism, were accommodated ; and I have seen abolition ministers sent to distant or poor circuits, to which I have reason to believe they were appointed as an episcopal chastisement for daring to say that slavery is a sin and ought to be abolished. I have seen whole congregations pronounced out of the church, by a public declaration of the preachers whom the Bishop saw fit most graciously to impose upon them against their known wishes ; and the principle of this expulsion *en masse*, without a form of trial, has been officially sanctioned by the Bishop, who is authorized to decide all such questions. These are but some of the developments of the arbitrary principles of the government of the M. E. church, which have been made during the anti-slavery discussion. I might enlarge by adding other facts, and illustrations, but I will leave this question here for the consideration of the candid.

III. A third and final reason which I shall now render, for dissolving my connection with the M. E. Church, is the uncharitable and bitter spirit which is manifested on the part of the adherents of the church and of her official organs, towards the dissenting brethren. Whenever a brother has presumed to utter an opinion on the subject of church polity, differing from the common views,

instead of meeting his views with sound Christian arguments to convince him of his error, the usual method has been at once to denounce him as an enemy, and assail his moral character. It is matter of history that the advocates of our present form of government have not relied so much upon the strength of their arguments, to put down more liberal views that have occasionally manifested themselves in the church, as upon the force of constitutional law, vigorously administered. Even since the secession of Brs. Horton, Scott, and Sunderland, it has been insisted by some that they should be treated as traitors, and be excluded from the pulpits of the church, while others are admitted who have always held views less in accordance with the common standards of the church. They have already been assailed as being "sordid" in their purposes; as being under the influence of "unhallowed ambition;" as making "not an honest effort;" as being "iniquitous" in their proceedings; and by two different papers, in the interest of the church, have the words which inspiration has applied to the self-willed, cruel and murderous, been applied to these brethren, whose offence is that of withdrawing from the church after they have been long abused in it, and after being often told by the same journals that, with their views, they ought to leave it. This is an extravagance of intolerance which I cannot bear. To think of retaining my standing in the church, and at the same time honestly

meet and rebuke this abusive and intolerant spirit, wherever I shall meet with it, is hopeless; and to remain in the church by silently enduring it, and thereby appearing to approve of what I abhor and detest, would not only require an entire change in my constitution and temperament, but also a sacrifice of my principles to a selfish, cowardly, worldly policy. If others are prepared to make such sacrifices, I am not; and in saying this, I intend no impeachment of the motives of others, but only a vindication of my own. I leave behind many whom I highly respect and most ardently love. With many of them I have labored and suffered; but now a sense of duty compels me, so far as church relation is concerned, to separate myself from them,—and I trust I do it in the fear of God, with an eye single to his glory, and in the hope of eternal life.

LUTHER LEE.

ANDOVER, Dec. 12, 1842.

## THE M. E. CHURCH AND SLAVERY.

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[Before proceeding to notice the connection of the M. E. Church with Slavery, it may not be improper to glance at the views of Mr. Wesley and the English Methodists.]

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### SECTION I.

#### SENTIMENTS OF JOHN WESLEY AND THE ENGLISH WESLEYANS.

The slave trade was extensively carried on during the whole of Mr. Wesley's life. Christians were generally asleep on the subject; and many professors of religion and some ministers of the gospel were extensively engaged in the atrocious business, even at the time of Mr. Wesley's death, and for some years afterward.

But he was in this, as in almost everything else, fifty years before the times. He published in 1774, seventeen years before his death, a pamphlet entitled "Thoughts on Slavery," which contains the modern doctrine of the strongest and severest writers on that subject. And his pamphlet has probably done more good in Europe and America, than any other single document ever written.

The following extracts are from that invaluable work.

"I strike at the root of this complicated villainy, I absolutely deny all slaveholding to be consistent with any degree of natural justice."

"That slaveholding is utterly inconsistent with mercy, is almost too plain to need a proof."

"*And this equally concerns every gentleman that has an estate in our American plantations; yea, ALL SLAVEHOLDERS, OF WHATEVER RANK AND DEGREE; seeing men-buyers are exactly on a level with men-stealers. You therefore are guilty, yea, PRINCIPALLY GUILTY, of all these frauds, robberies, and murders. You are the spring that puts all the rest in motion; they would not stir a step without you; therefore the blood of all these wretches who die before their time, whether in their country or elsewhere, lies upon your head. 'The blood of thy brother' (for, whether thou wilt believe it or no, such he is in the sight of Him that made him) 'crieth against thee from the earth,' from the ship, and from the waters. O, whatever it costs, put a stop to its cry before it is too late: instantly, at any price, were it the half of your goods, deliver thyself from blood guiltiness! Thy hands, thy bed, thy furniture, thy house, thy lands, are at present stained with blood! Surely it is enough; accumulate no more guilt; spill no more the blood of the innocent! Do not hire another to shed blood; do not pay him for doing it! Whether you are a Christian or no, show yourself a MAN! Be not more savage than a lion or a bear!*

"Perhaps you will say, 'I do not buy any negroes; I only use those left me by my father.' So far it is well; but is it enough to satisfy your own conscience? *Had your father, have you, has any man living, a right to use another as a slave? It cannot be,*

*even setting revelation aside.* It cannot be that either war, or contract, can give any man such a property in another as he has in his sheep and oxen. *Much less is it possible that any child of man should ever be born a slave.* Liberty is the right of every human creature, as soon as he breathes the vital air; *and no human law can deprive him of that right which he derives from the law of nature.*

“If, therefore, you have any regard to *justice*, (to say nothing of *mercy*, nor the revealed law of God) render unto all their due. Give liberty to whom liberty is due, that is, to every child of man, to every partaker of human nature. Let none serve you but by his own act and deed, by his own voluntary choice. Away with all whips, all chains, all compulsion! Be gentle toward all men; and see that you invariably *do unto every one as you would they should do unto you.*

“J. WESLEY.”

The following is Mr. Wesley's dying testimony. This letter is exceedingly interesting, inasmuch as it was the last but two which Mr. Wesley ever wrote, and it is dated only four days before his death. It was written to the great and good Mr. Wilberforce, the pioneer of the abolition cause in England.

“LONDON, FEB. 26, 1791.

“Dear Sir—Unless the Divine power has raised you up as *Athanasius contra Mundum* [Athanasius

against the world], I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise, in opposing that execrable villany, which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But, 'if God be for you, who can be against you?' O, 'be not weary in well doing!' Go on, in the name of God, and in the power of his might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it. Reading this morning a tract, written by a poor African, I was particularly struck by that circumstance—that a man who has a black skin, being wronged or outraged by a white man, can have no redress; it being a law, in all our colonies, that the oath of a black against a white goes for nothing. *What villany is this?*

"Your affectionate servant,

" J. WESLEY."

And yet the General Conference of the M. E. Church has been guilty of this very "VILLAINY," in the black law affair.

The Wesleyan Methodist Conference in 1830, *Resolved*, "That, as a body of Christian ministers, they feel themselves called upon again to record their solemn judgment, that the holding of human beings in a state of slavery *is in direct opposition* to all the principles of natural rights, and to the benign spirit of the religion of Christ.



"That the Conference fully concur in those strong moral views of the *evil of slavery* which are taken by their fellow-Christians of different denominations; and that they express their sympathy with an injured portion of their race, and their abhorrence of all those principles on which it is attempted to defend the subjection of human beings to hopeless and interminable slavery.

"That the Conference still farther recommend, in the strongest manner, to such of the members of the Methodist societies as enjoy the *elective franchise*, that, in this great crisis, when the question is, whether justice and humanity shall triumph over oppression and cruelty, or nearly a million of our fellow-men, many of whom are also our fellow-Christians, shall remain excluded from the rights of humanity, and the privileges of that constitution under which they are born; they will *use that solemn trust* to promote the rescue of our country from the guilt and dishonor which have been brought upon it by a criminal connivance at the oppressions which have so long existed in its colonies, and that, in the elections now on the eve of taking place, *they will give their influence and votes only to those candidates who PLEDGE THEMSELVES* to support in parliament, the most *effectual measures for the entire abolition of slavery* throughout the colonies of the British empire."

Dr. Clarke, in his Commentary, expressed himself on the subject of slavery as follows:

"In heathen countries, slavery was in some

sort excusable ; among Christians, it is an *enormity* and a *crime*, for which perdition has scarcely an adequate state of punishment."

Again he says—" I here register my testimony against the unprincipled, inhuman, anti-christian, and diabolical *slave trade*—with all its authors, promoters, abettors, and sacrilegious gains; as well as against the great devil, the father of it and them."

The following are extracts from Richard Watson on slavery :

" Slavery was manstealing in its origin ; and with this vicious origin it remains tainted to this day. It would be as hopeless a task to wash it off, as to wash the Ethiop white. Characterized as a crime against God and man, the thin gauze of sophistry cannot conceal its hateful aspect; and the attempt to find a palliation for it, only makes more audible those thunders which are launched against it, as one of the most odious crimes both in the law and in the Gospel.

" My argument then is, if it was wrong to enslave the negroes, it is wrong to keep them in hopeless bondage ; and it follows that, after this country had renounced the African slave trade, it was bound by the *very principles* on which that wretched traffic was repudiated, to have taken measures for the liberation of all who had thus been wickedly reduced to a state of captivity, and long before this time to have converted them into a free, industrious, and happy peasantry."

"Slavery is a national *violence* and *theft*—an oppressive, a debasing, a relentless, and a *murderous* bondage."

The following sentiment was expressed by Dr. Bunting, President of the Wesleyan Conference, in 1836.

"Slavery is *always wrong*—ESSENTIALLY, ETERNALLY, and INCURABLY WRONG. DIE IT MUST; *and happy should I have been, had they* [the General Conference of the M. E. Church] PASSED SENTENCE OF DEATH UPON IT!"

Such has been Wesleyan Methodism from the *beginning*; and such was American Methodism *once*. But alas, what is it *now*!

The following is from an Address of the Wesleyan Conference to the M. E. Church, put forth in 1835:

"Our American brethren will doubtless allow us the fraternal liberty to express our conviction that GREAT SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES are *opposed to the continuance* of slavery in a *Christian state*; that the permission of it is one of those deviations from natural equity and evangelical purity which call for *further deviations* to abet and maintain them; that it is contrary to the precepts of christianity, and violates and counteracts the principles and obligations by which the Gospel urges those precepts."

In 1836 the Wesleyan Conference sent out another address to the M. E. Church, from which I make the following extract:

*"Slavery in itself is so obviously opposed to the immutable principles of justice, to the inalienable rights of man of whatever color or condition, to the social and civil improvement and happiness of the human family, to the principles and precepts of Christianity, and to the full accomplishment of the merciful designs of the Gospel, that we cannot but consider it the duty of the Christian church to bear an unequivocal testimony against a system which involves so much SIN AGAINST GOD, and so much oppression and wrong, inflicted on an unoffending race of our fellow-men."*

The pro-slavery character of the M. E. Church prevented the publication of either of the addresses from which the above extracts are taken, in any of the church papers. A motion was made by the writer, on the floor of the General Conference, to have these addresses published; but it was *rejected*. Thus our Wesleyan brethren were treated with *contempt*.

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## SECTION II.

### FORMER SENTIMENTS AND USAGES OF THE M. E. CHURCH.

The M. E. Church never advocated the doctrine of *immediate* abolition; but then we have the clearest evidence that she was formerly strongly opposed to the *continuance* of slavery in the church

or in the country—and that she has widely departed from her former strong testimony against slavery.

The first two bishops of the M. E. Church (Dr. Coke and Francis Asbury) were decided anti-slavery men. They kindled up, according to the testimony of Dr. Capers, a fire in the South which did not go out for thirty years. Mr. Asbury's Journal is full of his opposition to slavery. I will give a few specimens.

"1772. We dined with Mr. R., who cannot keep negroes for conscience's sake, and this was a topic of our conversation.

"1776. After preaching at the Point, I met the class and then the black people, some of whose unhappy masters forbid their coming for religious instruction. How will the sons of oppression answer for their conduct when the great Proprietor of all shall call them to account.—*Vol. 1, p. 289.*

"1780. Spoke to some select friends about slave-keeping, but they could not bear it; this I know, God will plead the cause of the oppressed, though it gives offence to say so here. O Lord, banish the INFERNAL SPIRIT OF SLAVERY from thy dear Zion.

"1783. We all agreed (at the Virginia Conference) in the spirit of African liberty, and strong testimonies were borne in its favor at our love-feast.—*Ib. pp. 356.*

"1785. At the Virginia Conference he says.—

I found the minds of the people greatly agitated with our rules against slavery, and a prepared petition to the general assembly for the emancipation of the blacks. Colonel — and Dr. Coke disputed on the subject, and the Colonel used some threats : next day brother O'Kelly let fly at them, and they were made angry enough ; we, however, came off with whole bones.—*Ib.* p. 384.

“We waited on General Washington, who received us very politely, and gave us his opinion against slavery.—*Ib.* p. 385.

“1787. Rode to brother Johnson's—without the labor of slaves, he manages to have abundance for man and beast.—*Vol.* 2, p. 11.

“1788. Virginia. Other persuasions are less supine ; and their ministers boldly preach against the freedom of slaves. Our brother Everett, with no less zeal and boldness, cries aloud for liberty and emancipation.

“Maryland. Most of our members in these parts have freed their slaves.—*Ib.* p. 39.

“1796. We reached Charleston. Here are the rich, the rice, and the slaves. The last is awful to me. Wealthy people settled on the rice lands of Cooper's river, hold from fifty to two hundred slaves on a plantation in chains of bondage.—*Ib.* p. 241.

“My spirit was grieved at the conduct of some Methodists, that *hire out slaves*, at public places, to the highest bidder, to cut, skin, and starve them. I think such members ought to be dealt

with. On the side of the oppressors there is law and power, but where is justice and mercy to the poor slaves? What eye will pity, what hand will help, or ear listen to their distresses? I will try if words can be like drawn swords to pierce the hearts of the owners.—*Ib.* p 273.

“1798. My mind is much pained. O! to be dependent on slaveholders is in part to be a slave, and I was free born.

“On Saturday, I had a close conversation with some of our local ministry. We are happy to find seven out of ten were not in the spirit or practice of slavery.

“I assisted Philip Sands to draw up an agreement for our officary to sign against slavery. Thus we may know the real sentiments of our local preachers. It appears to me *that we can never fully reform the people, until we reform the preachers*—and that hitherto except purging the travelling connection, we have been working at the wrong end. But, if it be lawful for local preachers to hold slaves, then it is lawful for travelling preachers also; and they may keep plantations and overseers upon their quarters: but this *reproach of inconsistency must be rolled away*.

“1814 Georgia. Away with the false cant, that the better you use the negroes, the worse they will use you! Make them good, then—teach them the fear of God, and learn to fear Him yourselves, ye masters! I understand not the

doctrine of cruelty. As soon as the poor Africans see me they spring with life to the boat, and make a heavy flat skim along like a light canoe; poor starved souls—God will judge!”—*Ib. p. 376.*

How unlike are these sentiments to the doctrine of Bishop Hedding, as contained in the following sentence :

“The right to hold a slave is founded on this rule, ‘Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.’”—*Ch. Ad. and Journal, Oct. 20, 1837.*

“In 1780, the Conference acknowledged that slavery is contrary TO THE LAWS OF GOD, MAN AND NATURE, and hurtful to society; CONTRARY TO THE DICTATES OF CONSCIENCE AND PURE RELIGION; and doing what we would not that others should do unto us; and they pass their DISAPPROBATION upon all our friends who keep slaves, and they advise their freedom.”

In Lee’s History of the Methodists we are told that the following rules were, in substance, adopted in 1784.

“We view it as contrary to the golden law of God, on which hangs all the law and the prophets,\* and the unalienable rights of mankind, as well as

\* Is it not wonderful, that the very precept so often appealed to by the Fathers, to show the incompatibility of slavery with Chistianity, should now be pleaded by Bishop Hedding of the same Church, to prove the “right to hold a slave?” *How are the mighty fallen?*



every principle of the revolution, to hold in the deepest debasement, in a more abject slavery than is perhaps to be found in any part of the world except America, so many souls that are capable of the image of God. We therefore think it our most bounden duty to take immediately some effectual method to extirpate this abomination from among us ; and for that purpose we add the following to the rules of our society, viz :

“ Every member in our Society, who has slaves, in those States where the laws will admit of freeing them, shall, after notice given him by the preacher, within twelve months (except in Virginia, and there within two years) legally execute and record an instrument, whereby he sets free every slave in his possession ; those who are from forty to forty-five, immediately, or at farthest at the age of forty-five.

“ Those who are between the ages of twenty and forty, immediately, or within the course of five years. Those who are between the ages of twenty and twenty-five, immediately, or at farthest at the age of thirty. Those who are under the age of twenty, as soon as they are twenty-five at farthest. And every infant, immediately on its birth.

“ Every person concerned, who will not comply with these rules, shall have liberty quietly to withdraw from our Society within the twelve months following ; the notice being given him, as aforesaid ; otherwise the assistant shall exclude him.

"No person so voluntarily withdrawn, or so excluded, shall ever partake of the supper of the Lord with the Methodists, till he complies with the above requisitions.

"No person holding slaves, shall, in future, be admitted into Society, or to the Lord's Supper, till he previously comply with these rules, concerning Slavery.

*"Those who buy, sell, or give them away, unless on purpose to free them, shall be expelled immediately."*

The very next year (1785) the conference said,—

"We do hold in the DEEPEST ABHORRENCE THE PRACTICE OF SLAVERY, and SHALL NOT CEASE TO SEEK its DESTRUCTION, by all wise and prudent means."

In 1788 the following item made a part of the General Rules :

"The *buying or selling* the BODIES AND SOULS of men, women or children, with an intention to enslave them."—*Bangs' History of M. E. Church, Vol. 1. p. 213.*

[In the year 1800 the following articles on slavery made a part of the M. E. Discipline.]

#### "OF SLAVERY.

"*Question.* What regulation shall be made for the extirpation of the crying evil of African slavery ?

"*Answer.* 1. We declare that we are more than ever convinced of the great evil of African slavery, which still exists in these United States, and do

most earnestly recommend to the Yearly Conferences, Quarterly Meetings, and to those who have the oversight of Districts and Circuits, to be exceedingly cautious what persons they admit to official stations in our Church; and in the case of future admission to official stations, to require such security of those who hold slaves, for the emancipation of them, *immediately*, or *gradually*, as the laws of the States respectively, and the circumstances of the case will admit; and we do fully authorize all the Yearly Conferences to make whatever regulation they judge proper, in the present case, respecting the admission of persons to official stations in our church.

“When any travelling preacher becomes an owner of a slave or slaves, *by any means*, he shall forfeit his ministerial character in our church, unless he executes, if it be practicable, a legal emancipation of such slaves, conformably to the laws of the State in which he lives.

“No slaveholder shall be received in society, till the preacher who has the oversight of the Circuit, shall have spoken to him freely and faithfully upon the subject of slavery.

“4. Every member of the society, who sells a slave, shall immediately, after full proof, be excluded from the society, and if any member of our society purchase a slave, the ensuing Quarterly Meeting shall determine on the number of years in which the slave so purchased would work out the price of his purchase. And the person so purchasing, shall imme-

diately after such determination, execute a legal instrument for the manumission of such slave, at the expiration of the term determined by the Quarterly Meeting. And in default of his executing such instrument of manumission, or on his refusal to submit his case to the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting, *such member shall be excluded the society.* Provided also, that in the case of a female slave, it shall be inserted in the aforesaid instrument of manumission, that all her children who shall be born during the years of her servitude, shall be free at the following times, namely—every female child at the age of *twenty-one*, and every male child at the age of *twenty-five*. Nevertheless, if the member of our society executing the said instrument of manumission, judge it proper, he may fix the times of manumission of the female slaves before mentioned, at an earlier age than that which is prescribed above.

“5. The preachers and other members of our society, are requested to consider the subject of negro slavery with deep attention; and that they impart to the General Conference, through the medium of the Yearly Conferences, or otherwise, any important thoughts upon the subject, that the Conference may have *full light*, in order to take further steps towards the eradicating this enormous evil from that part of the Church of God to which they are connected.

“6. The Annual Conferences are directed to draw up addresses for the gradual emancipation

of the slaves, to the legislatures of those States, in which no general laws have been passed for that purpose. These addresses shall urge in the most respectful, but pointed manner, the necessity of a law for the gradual emancipation of the slaves; proper Committees shall be appointed, by the Annual Conferences, out of the most respectable of our friends, for the conducting of the business; and the *Presiding Elders*, Elders, Deacons, and Travelling Preachers, shall procure as many proper signatures as possible to the addresses, and give all the assistance in their power, in every respect, to aid the committees, and to further *this blessed undertaking*. LET THIS BE CONTINUED FROM YEAR TO YEAR, TILL THE DESIRED END BE ACCOMPLISHED.”

Such were the regulations entered into from time to time, in the early history of Methodism. And, says Mr. Samuel Davis, a member of the M. E. Church, born in Maryland, and residing there until 1826, in a letter to Dr. Fisk, April 8, 1838,

“So universally were those rules attended to, that I never knew but one single instance of any member’s neglecting them; and that was my next neighbor, at whose house our presiding elder called, in the year 1792, on business, with a preacher who was then stationed there. When the presiding elder was about to retire, the gentleman of the house invited him to stay to dinner, saying, ‘it was almost ready.’ The reply was, ‘I never eat a meal in a Methodist slaveholder’s house, if I

know it,' and he immediately left him. I have heard Bishop Asbury, and many of the early preachers, preach pointedly against slavery. At our Quarterly Meetings, where hundreds of slaveholders were present with their slaves, I have repeatedly heard some of our preachers CONDEMN the PRACTICE of slavery, as a vile SIN against God, *morally, socially, and politically* WRONG, no one interrupting or molesting the man of God. And *I have no doubt had all our ministers done their duty, there would not have been a slave left in this country 20 years ago.* For I know, that about that time and a few years previous, there were hundreds of slaves set free by the members of the Methodist E. Church. As soon as I became twenty-one years of age, I liberated the slaves I inherited, those over twenty-one, *immediately*, and those under, as soon as they became twenty-one years of age."

Says Rev. Joseph Everett, a distinguished minister of the M. E. Church, "In 1787, I went down to Cape Charles, through Northampton, and urged the *necessity of letting the oppressed go free*; for which I was almost obliged to run the gauntlet. I believe when the Lord first sent the Methodists into America to preach the gospel, many got converted who held slaves; and all that continued faithful, after some time, the Lord convinced them it was wrong to keep them; and all who rejected conviction, lost their right to the favor of God. But at this time, I fear all who hold their slaves,

may go to hear the gospel preached all their days, but if they do not give up their oppressive manner of living, the word of God will be a savor of death unto their souls, and that they will die in their sins and in their blood, and will be damned for their wickedness."

The manner in which the power of the gospel wrought upon the slaveholder is strikingly illustrated in the life of Rev. Freeborn Garrettson, the companion of ASBURY, and all the first generation of Methodists. In his life, compiled by Rev. N. Bangs, pp. 33, 34, 35, we have the following, viz:—"I arose from the earth, and advancing towards the house in deep thought, I came to this conclusion, that I would exclude myself from the society of men, and live in a cell upon bread and water, mourning out my days for having grieved my Lord. I went into my room and sat in one position till nine o'clock. I then threw myself on the bed, and slept till morning. Although it was the Lord's day I did not intend to go to any place of worship; neither did I desire to see any person, but wished to pass my time away in total solitude. I continued reading the Bible till eight, and then under a sense of duty, called the family together for prayer. As I stood with a book in my hand, in the act of giving out a hymn, this thought powerfully struck my mind. 'It is not right for you to keep your fellow-creatures in bondage; you must let the oppressed go free. I knew it was that same blessed voice which had spoken

to me before—till then, I had never suspected that the practice of slave-keeping was wrong: I had not read a book on the subject, nor been told by any—I paused a minute, and then replied, ‘Lord, the oppressed shall go free.’ And I was as clear of them in my mind, as if I had never owned one. I told them they did not belong to me, and that I did not desire their services without making them a compensation: I was now at liberty to proceed in worship. After singing I kneeled to pray. Had I the tongue of an angel, I could not fully describe what I felt: all my dejection, and that melancholy gloom which preyed upon me, vanished in a moment, a divine sweetness ran through my whole frame. It was God, not man, that taught me the impropriety of holding slaves: and I shall never be able to praise him enough for it. My very heart has bled, since that, for slaveholders, especially those who make a profession of religion, for I believe it to be a crying sin.”

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### SECTION III.

#### THE M. E. CHURCH PRO-SLAVERY.

The M. E. Church has evidently been progressing *backwards* from the year 1800, though the first retrograde step was taken in 1792, in the alteration which then took place in the General Rule, leav-



ing out the words "bodies and souls," &c., as will be seen from what follows.

Rev. Robert Emory in his history of the Discipline, informs us that he finds the following in

1789. "The buying or selling the bodies and souls of men, women or children, with an intention to enslave them."

1792. It reads, "The buying or selling of men, women or children, with an intention to enslave them."

1808. It reads, "The buying *and* selling of men, women *and* children," &c. *For this alteration no authority is found in the journal of the General Conference.*

An important admission, this! If *and* was put in the place of *or* by mistake, which is hardly possible, how is the leaving out of BODIES AND SOULS in the original rule, to be accounted for? Let the friends of the church account for these changes as they may; we have positive proof before our eyes, that the rule has been changed twice since the church was organised: and this rule being a part of the constitution of the church, the constitution of the church has been changed *twice*.

And the following, from a letter published in the Pittsburg Christian Advocate, by Rev. Mr. Drummond, is not less important.

"If we take the action of the General Conference, as a true index of the anti-slavery feeling, and zeal of the church, I think it is apparent, that

these have been considerably diminished since the year 1800."

Now I would inquire, what becomes of the Declaration of the Bishops, made in their address to the late General Conference, that the "general rule on slavery" "*has stood from the beginning UN-CHANGED ?*"

These changes have greatly altered the character of the rule. The original rule made the crime of slave-trading in the M. E. Church what the spirit of inspiration made it in mystic Babylon—trading in souls of men. When the change was made from *bodies and souls of men, women and children*, to *men, women or children*, the idea of selling and buying the immortal part was not so clearly expressed, and the Babylonish character of the church was not so fully and clearly acknowledged. Here was a gain on the part of slavery. Though buying men, women or children was buying the *bodies and souls* of these persons, the language was smoothed down, and no longer calculated to shock the moral feelings so violently. But when *and* was substituted for *or*, the whole meaning of the rule became changed. Previous to this, the *buying* or *selling* a man, woman or child—any human being—was a violation of the rule, but not so now. It takes six things to violate the rule as it now stands. 1. Buying a man (or men). 2. Buying a woman (or women). 3. Buying a child (or children). 4. Selling a man (or men). 5. Selling a woman (or women). 6.

Selling a child (or children). Mark, it is the buying AND selling all these persons which it forbids, not buying or selling any one class of them, or any one of either class, nor yet buying and selling any one class, or any one of either class, but buying AND setting at least, one of each class.

In 1804, the paragraphs about considering the subject, and petitions to the legislatures (namely, No. 4 of 1796, and No. 6, of 1800) were stricken out.

1808. Paragraphs 2 and 3 of 1796 were struck out, and the following substituted.

“3. The General Conference authorizes each annual conference to form their own regulations relative to buying and selling slaves.”

This was stricken out in 1820, and the last three paragraphs of the section on slavery, p. 196 of Dis., were added.

And yet the Western Christian Advocate, of December 8th, 1837, says, “our readers should *know* that our church has *neither given up nor* MODIFIED ANY *of her strong Scriptural doctrines*, OR REGULATIONS, *on the subject of slavery*.” And Dr. Bangs in the Christian Advocate, of January 29, 1833, said, the Methodist Episcopal Church “has always held ONE *undeviating language in opposition to slavery*.” One of two conclusions must be come to : Drs. Elliot and Bangs are either ignorant of the history of their church's connection with slavery, or are dishonest enough to practice deception on their readers, by affirming what they know is not true.

From 1820 to 1835, the church appears to have

been in a profound sleep; and when she awoke it was only to oppose all anti-slavery measures. Coke and Asbury were dead, and the old Methodist preachers had learned better than to preach against slavery.

The church since 1820 has borne no testimony against slavery, except what is contained in the *mutilated* general rule; and even this is admitted to be a dead letter in the South. The section on slavery in the latter part of the Discipline many Episcopal Methodists contend is not in *opposition*, but in *favor* of slavery.

In the latter end of the year 1834, a number of ministers, members of the New England and New Hampshire Conferences, addressed their brethren in the ministry of these two conferences, in an able Appeal, which was published the forepart of Jan. 1835, in Zion's Herald Extra. This drew forth a long reply called the "Counter Appeal," signed by W. Fisk, D. D. Whedon, John Lindsey, Jacob Sanborn, H. H. White, H. S. Ramsdell, Abel Stevens, and I believe one other. This document was judged to contain pro-slavery sentiments, and it was critically examined by the authors of the Appeal, April 22, 1835. About the time the first Appeal was written, and before it was published, another member of the New England Conference commenced a series of essays in Zion's Herald on the subject of slavery. The whole subject of slavery and abolition was discussed in Zion's Herald for several months, by O. Scott and others

on one side, and W. Fisk and D. D. Whedon on the other; and so rapidly did anti-slavery sentiments spread and prevail, that within six months, a majority of the New England and New Hampshire Conferences were converted to the doctrine of immediate abolition; and in June, 1835, an anti-slavery delegation from both conferences was secured to the General Conference, with the exception of a single delegate!

The General Conference assembled at Cincinnati the ensuing May. It consisted of about 150 members. All except seventeen were either slaveholders or anti-abolitionists. Of these seventeen, nine were from New Hampshire, six from New England, one from Maine, and one from Pittsburg.

At this Conference, commenced what may be emphatically termed the modern pro-slavery measures of the M. E. Church; or in other words, "the reign of terror!"

We will glance at some of the pro-slavery measures adopted at the General Conference of 1836!

An Anti-Slavery Society had been formed in Cincinnati a year or two before. A meeting of the society was appointed for the evening of the 10th of May, to which the abolitionists attending the conference as delegates, were invited. Of those who attended, two of them made remarks suited to the occasion. On the 12th of May, Rev. S. G. Roszell presented to the conference the following preamble and resolutions:—

"Whereas, great excitement has pervaded this

country on the subject of modern abolitionism, which is reported to have been increased in this city by the unjustifiable conduct of two members of the General Conference, in lecturing upon, and in favor of, that agitating topic; and, whereas, such a course on the part of any of its members is calculated to bring upon this body the suspicion and distrust of the community, and misrepresent its sentiments in regard to the point at issue; and, whereas, in this aspect of the case, a due regard for its own character, as well as a just concern for the interest of the church confided to its care, demand a full, decided and unequivocal expression of the views of the General Conference in the premises—Therefore,

“1. Resolved,—By the delegates of the annual Conferences in General Conference assembled that they disapprove in the most unqualified sense, the conduct of the two members of the General Conference, who are reported to have lectured in this city recently, upon, and in favor of, modern abolitionism.”

“2. Resolved,—by the delegates of the Annual Conferences in General Conference assembled, that they are decidedly opposed to modern abolitionism, and wholly disclaim any right, wish, or intention, to interfere in the civil, and political relation between master and slave, as it exists in the slave-holding states of this Union.”

The preamble and resolutions were adopted—

the first resolution by 122 to 11, the last by 120 to 14.

A member of the General Conference moved to amend the last resolution by incorporating a sentiment of the Discipline on this wise: that though "we are as much as ever convinced of the great evil of slavery," yet we are decidedly opposed to modern abolitionism, &c. This amendment was in the very language of the Discipline; and though the *very sentence* which would have contained it, would have condemned abolitionism, yet such was the pro-slavery character of the General Conference, that they would not say, as the Discipline had always said, that slavery was an "evil."

They refused to publish the address of the English Wesleyan Conference, because it alluded to slavery; and in a Pastoral Address to the M. E. Church, this Conference exhorted Methodists to abstain from all "abolition movements and associations, and to refrain from patronizing any of their publications, &c.

They further said: "From every view of the subject which we have been able to take, and from the most calm and dispassionate survey of the whole ground, we have come to the conclusion that the only safe, scriptural, and prudent way for us, both as ministers and people to take, is, **WHOLLY TO REFRAIN** from this agitating subject," &c.

The Ohio Annual Conference, had a short time before,

"1. Resolved, That we deeply regret the proceedings of the abolitionists, and anti-slavery societies in the free States, and the consequent excitement produced thereby in the slave states; that we, as a Conference, disclaim all connection and co-operation with, or belief in the same; and that we hereby recommend to our junior preachers, local brethren, and private members within our bounds, to abstain from any connection with them, or participation of their acts in the premises whatever."

"2. Resolved, That those brethren and citizens of the North, who resist the abolition movements with firmness and moderation, are the true friends to the church, to the slaves of the South, and to the constitution of our common country," &c.

The New York Annual Conference met in June 1836, and

"1. Resolved, That this Conference fully concur in the advice of the late General Conference; as expressed in their Pastoral Address."

"2. Resolved, That we disapprove of the members of this Conference patronizing, or in any way giving countenance to a paper called 'Zion's Watchman,' because, in our opinion, it tends to disturb the peace and harmony of the body, by sowing dissensions in the church."

"3 Resolved, That although we could not



condemn any man, or withhold our suffrages from him on account of his *opinions* merely in reference to abolitionism, yet we are decidedly of the opinion that none ought to be elected to the office of a deacon, or elder, in our church, unless he give a pledge to the Conference, that he will refrain from agitating the church with discussions on this subject, and the more especially as the one promises 'reverently to obey them to whom the charge and government over him is committed, following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions : ' and the other with equal solemnity promises, to 'maintain and set forward, as much as lieth in him, quietness, peace and love among all Christian people, and especially among them that are, or shall be committed to his charge.'"

In 1838, the same Conference

"Resolved, As the sense of this Conference, that any of its members, or probationers, who shall patronize Zion's Watchman, either by writing in commendation of its character, by circulating it, recommending it to our people, or procuring subscribers, or by collecting or remitting monies, shall be deemed guilty of indiscretion, and dealt with accordingly."

Under this rule, several members of that Conference were tried and suspended.

In the year 1837, the Baltimore Conference passed the following resolution :

"That in *all cases of administration* under the *general rule*, in reference to buying and selling men,

women and children, &c., it be and hereby is recommended to all committees, as the sense of this Conference, that said rule be *taken, construed and understood*, so as *not to make the guilt or innocence of the accused to depend upon the SIMPLE FACT of PURCHASE or SALE of any such slave or slaves, but upon the attendant circumstances of cruelty, injustice, or inhumanity* on the one hand, or those of *kind purposes or good intentions*, on the other, under which the transactions shall have been perpetrated; and further, it is recommended that, in all such cases, the charge be brought for immorality, and the *circumstances* be adduced as specifications under that charge."

This resolution takes the ground openly, that slaves may be bought and sold without guilt; and not only so, but with *kind purposes and good intentions*. The *guilt or innocence* does not, in the judgment of the Baltimore Conference, depend on "the simple fact of purchase or sale," (mark this,) but on the *circumstances*; hence the charge is not to be brought for the violation of the "*rule*," but for immorality; and the fact that a slave was *bought or sold*, is not to be brought as a specification to sustain the charge of immorality, but the *circumstances*. Then there are circumstances in which it would be right, kind, and good, to sell or buy slaves, and in which it would be *wrong, cruel and unjust*, so to do. The circumstances are to make out the guilt in a case of administration under this rule, "the general rule," not the *FACT*

of *sale or purchase*, hence the rule does not forbid *sale or purchase*.

The General Conference of 1840 approved of the journals of the Baltimore Conference with this resolution in them—approved of them, this resolution and all; consequently approved of it, and thus made it their own; hence the doctrine of the Baltimore Conference, that the “general rule” is not to “be taken, construed, or understood,” so as to convict a person of guilt, &c., for the simple “*purchase or sale*” of slaves, is the doctrine of the General Conference—the doctrine of the whole church.

The Georgia Conference, in 1837, passed the following resolutions, it is said *unanimously* :—

“Whereas there is a clause in the Discipline of our Church which states that we are as much as ever convinced of the great evil of *slavery*; and whereas the said clause has been *perverted* by some, and used in such a manner as to produce the impression that the Methodist Episcopal Church believed *slavery* to be a *moral evil*,

“Therefore, *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Georgia Annual Conference, that slavery, as it exists in the United States, *is not a moral evil*.

“*Resolved*, That we view *slavery* as a civil and domestic institution, and one with which, as ministers of Christ, we have nothing to do, further than to ameliorate the condition of the slave, by endeavoring to impart to him and his master the benign influences of the religion of Christ, and aiding both on their way to heaven.

“On motion, it was *Resolved, unanimously, That* the Georgia Annual Conference regard with feelings of profound respect and approbation the dignified course, pursued by our several superintendents or bishops in suppressing the attempts that have been made by various individuals to get up and protract an excitement in the churches and country on the subject of *abolitionism*.

“*Resolved, further, That* they shall have our cordial and zealous support in sustaining them in the ground they have taken.—[Extract from the Minutes.]

“THOMAS C. BENNING, *Secretary.*”

On the above resolutions the Christian Guardian, a Methodist paper published in Canada, made the following sensible remarks :

“ALAS ! ALAS ! ‘*You that have tears, prepare to shed them now.*’

“Sainted spirit of the venerable Wesley ! Could shame and anger disturb thy deep and holy tranquillity, this would call them into exercise ! If for aught thou couldst wish to revisit this ‘world of grief and sin,’ it would surely be to erase from the records of Methodism so foul a blot upon the character of the system which claims thee as its founder ; or to inscribe beneath it, in emblazoned capitals, thy firm protest. Gladly wouldst thou, with Heaven’s permission, have recorded, in a ‘hand-writing upon the wall’ of that conference room, thy unchanged belief of the true character of ‘AMERICAN SLAVERY, the vilest that ever saw the

*sun.' But 'if they hear not Moses and the prophets neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.'"*

On the 18th of January, 1838, Dr. Capers introduced into the South Carolina Conference, a similar resolution; containing the sentiment that slavery is not a moral evil. It passed by a large vote—unanimous, I believe.

The General Conference has sanctioned both these resolutions, and passed them both, to all intents and purposes, by its act of approving the Journals. That body approved them both, by a *direct vote*: hence these resolutions have become the resolutions of the whole church!

The Discipline requires (see p. 25) that the journals containing the proceedings of each Annual Conference be sent to the General Conference. The General Conference appoints a committee of one from each Annual Conference, to whom all the Annual Conference journals are referred for examination, and, if any thing be found anti-Methodistic, to report the same to the General Conference, to be censured or disposed of as that body may determine. The General Conference of 1840 had the journals of these conferences before them, as also those of the other Annual Conferences. This committee made a report dated June 1, 1840, in which the New Hampshire, New England, and Oneida Conferences were censured by name, and some others without naming them; but no complaint was whispered against the Geor-

gia or South Carolina Conferences. While this report was under consideration, ‘Rev. J. Dodge offered an amendment to the preamble, condemnatory of the Georgia resolution. He thought that, as the action of several conferences had received animadversion, impartiality required that there should be uniformity of treatment. He therefore moved to amend the report by adding, ‘The action of the Georgia Conference, in declaring that slavery, as it exists in these United States, is not a moral evil, contradicts the sense of the *general rule* and the tenth section of the Discipline on the subject, and is therefore irregular.’”

This amendment was laid on the table, and the report of the committees approving of the acts and doings of the Georgia and South Carolina Conferences adopted by a direct vote. The journals of the Georgia Conference were approved by the General Conference, in full view of this resolution; for Br. Dodge asked the Conference, to say that it was “*irregular*,” and they would not do even that much. The General Conference approved of this resolution; for they approved the journals, of which it was a part—the whole journals, without exception—and to approve of the whole is to approve of all the parts; for the whole contains all the parts. The Conference was asked to except to this part, and would not. This makes the case still stronger. And what is true of the Georgia Conference is also true of that of South Carolina, and of the

Baltimore Conferences, in the case we have noticed of buying and selling slaves. The General Conference has said *just* what these Conferences said, by approving and adopting what they said. The General Conference did say, in this case, that slavery, as it exists, not in the M. E. church, but in the United States, is *not* a moral evil; and when the General Conference said it, the M. E. Church said it; for that Conference is the mouth of the church. This, all this, is as clear as demonstration can make any thing.

“Not a moral evil!” In 1780, slavery was “*contrary to the laws of God*, man, and nature; now, “not a moral evil!” In 1784, it was a “crying evil,” and any member in any part of the country, who “sold a slave,” was to be “immediately expelled;” now, “not a *moral* evil!” In 1785, it was held in the “*deepest abhorrence* ;” in 1837, “not a moral evil!” It was still a crying evil in 1801; and expulsion was the penalty for selling a slave; but, in 1836, the General Conference condemned abolition, but refused to condemn slavery: therefore, in 1837, an Annual Conference says that slavery “is not a moral evil!” Can you, brethren, believe the Georgia and Baltimore Conferences would ever have taken the ground they have, had it not been for the doings of the General Conference? Can you see how a Methodist Bishop could possibly put such resolutions to vote, if a Bishop has a right in any case to decline such business? Was that “disciplinary business?”

“proper conference business?” In view of all these facts, can you doubt that the influence of the M. E. Church is in favor of slavery? For all this prostration of discipline, the General Conference laid the foundation!

But to see a body of professed ministers of Christ call that sum of all villainies (American slavery), a “civil and domestic institution!” How *civil* to rob human beings of all their rights—to enslave the image of God—to steal and enslave innocent children! If this is a *civil* institution, I hardly know where we should go to find a criminal institution! All this passes unreprieved by the official organs of the church!

And now I ask, has not the *spirit* as well as the practice of slavery increased in the M. E. Church for the last fifty years? I can no more doubt this, than I can doubt my existence. If any proposition can be established by facts, this can be.

And is it not equally certain, that the influence of the M. E. Church has been for some time past in favor of slavery? I cannot resist this conviction. I am morally certain that the M. E. Church is at this time one of the “great props” of slavery. A slaveholding ministry! A slaveholding church! What inconsistency! Do not many ministers and members give their influence and example to what the Bible calls, and Mr. Wesley considers, *man-stealing*?

Are there not Achan’s in the church, a thousand times worse than Achan of old? He robbed God



in temporal things : she has robbed him of *his own image* ! She has stolen, not a wedge of gold, a Babylonish garment, and a few hundred shekels of silver, but she has stolen *human beings*, and made merchandize of *immortal spirits* ! It appears to me that the language of the Prophet Ezekiel to ancient Tyre, is as applicable to the M. E. Church as it was to her.

“Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy **TRAFFIC** ; therefore will I bring forth a **FIRE** from the **MIDST OF THEE**, it shall **DEVOUR THEE** ; and I will bring thee to **ASHES** upon the earth, in the sight of all them that behold thee.”—*Ezek. xxviii.*

The M. E. Church has “defiled” her “**SANCTUARIES**” by the iniquity of her “**TRAFFIC**.” And does not the Almighty now threaten to cast her off as profane, and to destroy her ? Is not the portrait of Tyre too true a likeness of the Methodist Episcopal Church ? If she does not put away her iniquity, violence, and merchandize in the souls and bodies of men, the days of her prosperity will soon be numbered.

The voice of warning has gone forth, and the church now sins at her peril. Never till of late, has a Methodist minister dared to lift his *voice* or *pen* in defence of slavery ; but now, the man-stealer and robber finds apologists and defenders among Methodist Episcopal preachers, and that too in the Free States ! The church is stained with *blood*, and haunted with the groans of *death*—

*less, spirits!* Surely, it is enough. God's judgments will not always linger, nor his justice forever sleep. She claims the descendants of *stolen human beings* as PROPERTY! She makes slaves of the purchase of the Redeemer's blood.

Rev. Wm. Winans said, on the floor of the last General Conference, that he had become a slaveholder from *principle!*

Members of the church have been expelled—class-leaders, exhorters and local preachers have been disfranchised—young men have been refused admission into conferences for no other reason but their being active abolitionists. Travelling preachers have been suspended for contumacy and insubordination in relation to abolition. Presiding elders have been removed from their districts for their abolition measures, and bishops have gagged annual conferences on the slave question. The Discipline has been twice altered to effect the expulsion of the editor of *Zion's Watchman*, it is believed, and bishops have exhorted Methodist trustees to close their houses against Methodist anti-slavery lecturers. Several conferences have forced their young men to pledge themselves that they would not agitate the church with discussions on the slave question, before they could be ordained; while no reformation pledges have been required of *man-stealing* ministers as a condition of ordination. That which, according to Mr. Wesley, is exactly on a level with man-steal-

ing, is, in the opinion of the church, a very small matter compared with the shocking abominations of abolitionism!

Rev. Elijah Hedding, D. D., one of the Methodist Bishops, has said in a published address:

"The right to hold a slave is founded on this rule, 'Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.'"—*Ch. Adv. and Jour.* Oct. 20, 1837.

The General Conference of 1840 were guilty of the following pro-slavery measures.

1. It was *proved* on the floor of the General Conference, that the word "*or*" in the General Rule had been changed to "*and*" by *carelessness or design*, thus favoring slavery. This Stephen G. Roszel and Dr. Capers boldly asserted. No one either did or could deny this. It was *proved* that the word "*or*" was in the Discipline since 1808; and since that time the change could not have been constitutionally made without going the round of the annual conferences: but from the records it appears that this had never been done. And yet with all this plain, palpable evidence before them, they refused to make the correction! And why did they do this! I know no other reason but their *love of slavery*; or, at least, their fear of slaveholders.

2. But to cap the climax of pro-slaveryism, the General Conference passed the following resolution.

*“That it is inexpedient and UNJUSTIFIABLE in any of our ministers to admit the testimony of COLORED PERSONS against a white person, in church trials, in those states and territories where such testimony is rejected in COURTS OF LAW.”*

Here the rights and interests of the membership of the Church are not only cloven down, but the positive authority of Jesus Christ is set aside, and the unrighteous laws of a slaveholding community are made the measure of church privileges, and the standard of ecclesiastical proceedings.

[It is true the Colored Testimony resolution was rescinded at the General Conference of 1844; but this was done more from *expediency* than from *principle*. It was done to prevent secession. Had abolitionists and seceders made no noise about the matter, the records of the church had remained stained to this day !]

Bishop Waugh, at the New England Conference, held in Springfield, Mass., in June, 1842, refused to put the question for the adoption of the following resolution, stating that it was too late in the day to give his reasons for so doing.

*“Resolved, That it is the solemn conviction of the New England Annual Conference, that all slaveholding, that is, all recognition of the right of property in human beings, is contrary to the laws of nature and religion, and ought therefore to be discouraged by all wise and prudent means.”*

The influence of the Bishops is, and has been for years, decidedly in favor of slavery.

The same is true of all the General Conference papers.

It is not slandering the Church then, to say, that as a whole, she is *pro-slavery to the core*.

There is as much proof that the General Conference of the M. E. church is pro-slavery, as there is that the United States Congress is pro-slavery.

And those brethren who come out from pro slavery political parties, in consequence of their corruption, and still remain in a pro-slavery church, are *grossly inconsistent!*

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## SECTION IV.

### THE DUTY OF SECEDING FROM PRO-SLAVERY CHURCHES.

It cannot be right to remain a member of a church which tolerates slaveholding, unless it be right to hold communion with *man-stealers*—which are the worst of all stealers.

Mr. Wesley says, "This *equally* concerns all slaveholders, seeing men-buyers are exactly on a level with *men-stealers*." And the Bible says, "*If he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.*" Here the crime of *holding* those in bondage who were originally stolen, is considered a crime of equal enormity with that of the first thieves—a crime punishable (under the laws) with DEATH!

If it be right to retain a connection with a church

which tolerates slaveholding, then it must follow that we are at liberty to remain in fellowship with any other class of sinners. Slavery involves almost every other crime : it is the embodiment of the most frightful crimes that fall under the ban of the divine law, and if it can be admitted into the church, with the dark cloud of guilt, the deep and wide channels of corruption, and the bitter and overflowing waters of human misery, which follow in its train, there is no crime this side of Pandemonium itself, which can be excluded from the Church of Christ, by the laws which he has enacted for the government of the same. If this sin, when tolerated in the church, does not make secession a duty, no other sin, nor all other sins combined, can make secession a duty ; and we are driven upon the fearful consequence that we are at liberty, as Christians, to remain in, and support a church which tolerates every sin that has ever been committed in this fallen and corrupt world. When the church spreads her fold so wide as to enclose sinners, she loses her identity, and her distinctive character is merged in the common character of the world. If the toleration of slavery in the church does not make secession a duty, the existence of drunkenness, fornication, adultery, robbery, and theft, would not make secession a duty ; and yet not a man can be found who dare say he would remain in a church after it had repeatedly and publicly refused to make rules for the expulsion of persons notoriously guilty of

these latter crimes. By their own decision, then in relation to other sins, are abolitionists bound to secede from all pro-slavery churches.

The same principle that requires us to expel a corrupt individual, must require us to withdraw ourselves from the association, when a majority are equally corrupt, rendering their expulsion impossible. Now, it is too plain to be denied, that a majority of the M. E. church, and several other religious denominations, do tolerate slaveholders in the church; the minority, therefore, not having it in their power to separate themselves from the corruption of slaveholding, by expelling the corrupt party, are bound to effect such separation by seceding themselves from the corrupt body. If it be wrong to remain in church relation with a corrupt individual, which must be true if the church is bound to expel corrupt individuals, it cannot be right to remain in church relation with a greater number of individuals that are equally corrupt. The duty of expulsion rests upon the obligation to separate ourselves from sinners, and as this obligation cannot be lessened by increasing the number of the corrupt to a majority, it follows beyond the power of contradiction, that when a majority of any religious community become guilty of what ought to exclude an individual, the minority are under obligation to secede; and as slaveholding is a crime for which persons ought to be excluded from the Christian Church, it follows, by an irresistible

conclusion, that all true and honest abolitionists are bound to secede from their respective churches, which have made themselves answerable for slaveholding within their pale.

To admit slaveholders to the Church, is to say that slaveholding is, in the opinion of the Church, consistent with the principles and obligations of Christianity; hence, the Church that admits slaveholders to her communion, gives the influence of the Christianity she professes, to support slavery. The influence of the whole church which is lent to the support of slavery, by admitting slaveholders to her communion, is made up of the influence of each individual who belongs to and sustains the church; *therefore, every individual that belongs to and supports a church that tolerates slavery, lends his influence to support slavery.*

God, by express command, *requires* us to come out from all religious associations in fellowship with sinners.

Matt. xviii. 17. "Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." This is a universal rule, applicable to all offences; and hence it is applicable to the offence of slaveholding.

1. It is not to be regarded as merely conferring a privilege, or as informing us what we *may* do, but it is to be viewed in the light of a command, imposing an obligation which *binds* us in the case. To treat such persons as the text describes in any other way than as heathen, is to violate the law of Christ.



2. To comply with this command, and treat slaveholders as we would treat a heathen man, we must withdraw from those churches which admit them to fellowship. We would not belong to a church that admitted heathen to membership and communion; and as we are bound to treat slaveholders as we would treat a heathen man, we must be bound to retire from the church where they are admitted and fellowshipped.

Now, let us inquire what relation heathens and publicans sustained to the worshipers of the true God, in the days of our Saviour's incarnation, and what relation have they even at this day! Were heathen and open sinners permitted to mingle in the worship of the Almighty? No, verily. Are they now permitted to sit at the holy communion, to be members of churches, church sessions, presbyteries, conferences, synods, conventions, or general assemblies? These persons had no sort of religious connection with the worshipers of the true God, than which nothing is susceptible of clearer proof. We do not suppose that any have hardihood enough to deny the correctness of this position. Now, as the worshipers of Jehovah had no religious connection whatever—were not allowed to have any with heathen men, neither are Christians to have any with *impenitent, trespassing brethren*. And this is the sense in which we are to withdraw from proslavery brethren. The direction of the Saviour, in this place, means that we dissolve all religious

connection with disorderly persons, and it means nothing else. This would fix the meaning of the text, if there were not another passage to the same import in the Bible ; for, whatever is plainly, positively, and undeniably taught by any *one text* of Scripture, is true and of Divine authority ; for the Scriptures contain a harmony of truth. They never contradict themselves. But this passage does not stand alone.

1 Cor. v. 5. "But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner ; with such an one, no, not to eat." On this text it may be remarked.

1. That any one of the offences named brings the offender within its intent and meaning.

2. Every slaveholder comes within the meaning of the text. It not only includes all open sinners, as a general rule, but it specifically includes the sin of slaveholding. *Covetousness* and *extortion* are clearly among the attributes of slavery, and the text forbids us to keep company and eat with those who practice these.

3. Keeping company and eating with men in the sense of the text, cannot be supposed to mean more than *Christian fellowship*, or belonging to the same church with them, therefore the text clearly forbids us to belong to the same church with slaveholders ; and hence, when a majority of the church

persists in retaining slaveholders, *secession* is the only way left of obeying this command of God.

Here is a plain and positive command not to eat with certain persons—disorderly persons. And both Doddridge and Benson, two of our ablest Commentators, refer this prohibition to a common meal. If, therefore, we are forbidden to eat a common meal with one who is called a brother, if he be covetous or extortionary (and such certainly are slaveholders), most obviously may we not commune with them at the Sacrament.

But many take the ground that we have no concern as to who goes to the communion table, so we are right ourselves. We may take the fornicator, the thief, the idolator, or the slaveholder, all clotted with human gore, by the arm, and go to the holy communion, and there, in the nearest visible approach we can make to Christ on earth, hold the closest communion with these characters that can be held out of heaven. A minister in high standing, in one of the pro-slavery churches of this land, said, not long since, that he would go to the communion with the devil. But this is not the doctrine of the New Testament. If I have not misapplied this text, and I will thank any one who will prove that I have, Christians are forbidden to EAT *the Lord's supper* with any but those who give Scripture evidence of piety.

2 Cor. vi. 17. "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive

you." This is a command to Christians to come out from all association with the morally unclean and polluted, and as slavery is as great a sin, and as deeply polluting as the idolatry of the Corinthians, it is as binding on us to come out from church-fellowship with slaveholders, as it was in the days of the apostles, to come out from their heathen countrymen. It is a general rule, applicable to corruption in every age, of every kind.

Here the Lord has made a separation from disorderly persons, the conditions of sonship. From all these Scriptures we prove clearly and positively, that Christians are to hold no fellowship with disorderly brethren, or other disorderly persons; they are not to *eat* the Lord's supper with them; they are to have no connection with them, but such as they have with idolators and openly profane sinners. If the passages we have noticed do not prove these positions, then nothing can be proved by the Scripture.

Eph. v. 2. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." On this text, we should remark.

1. Slavery is, beyond all question, one of the unfruitful works of darkness.

2. To belong to a church in which slaveholding is tolerated, is to have some sort of fellowship with it, whereas the text commands us to have no fellowship with it.

3. The expression, "but rather reprove them,"

puts fellowship and reproof in opposition to each other, so that we cannot do both at the same time. It is therefore plain that to scripturally reprove slavery, we must first cease to fellowship it, by retiring from all religious associations with it.

2 Thes. iii. 6. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly."

1. Slaveholders, and all who apologize for them, and advocate their right to belong to the church, walk disorderly.

2. We cannot withdraw from such only by withdrawing from those churches which tolerate slaveholding in their communion; we are therefore commanded to secede from all pro-slavery religious associations.

God holds us responsible for the moral character of the religious associations to which we belong. We will here introduce the testimony of Mr. Watson, who is a standard author with all Episcopal Methodists, and whose testimony they must admit. Mr. Watson says,

"Every church declares, in some way, how it understands the doctrine and disciplinary laws of Christ. If fundamental error is found, the evil rests upon that church collectively, and *upon the members individually*, every one of whom is bound to try all doctrines by the Holy Scriptures, and cannot support an acknowledged system of error *without guilt*. As to the discipline, the manner in

which a church provides for public worship, the publication of the gospel, the administration of the sacraments, the instruction of the ignorant, the succor of the distressed, the admonition of the disorderly, and the excision of offenders is its declaration of the manner in which it interprets those injunctions, which also it does on its own collective responsibility, *and that of its members.*"

The simple declaration of Mr. Watson in the above extract, is, that every individual member of a church is responsible for the doctrine and discipline of the same, and, so far as they are acknowledged to be erroneous, they cannot support them "*without guilt.*" Take the M. E. Church then for an illustration, and it must be seen that her doctrine, or her discipline, or both, are fundamentally wrong on the subject of slavery. Her constitutional bodies declare that slavery is right, and her official organs contend that slavery ought not to be excluded from the church. This is all wrong; and to support the church in this position, is, according to Mr. Watson, to incur individual and personal guilt. His doctrine is that when the church made these declarations, so dreadfully erroneous, she did it on the individual responsibility of every member. Whoever may be willing to stand in the breach and stand such responsibility, we are not, *we dare not!*

The church is bound, in her collective capacity, to do what her members are bound to do in their

individual relations. If individuals were not bound to hold religious connection with disorderly persons, the church would not be bound to exclude such persons from her fellowship.

The church is an institution of God, and all its rights and obligations are from the divine Institutor; none of them are acquired. They are all ordained of God, and imposed by him on the individuals composing the church; and, as these individuals are not of the world, but chosen out of the world, the church is not of the world, but is also chosen out of the world, and, as Christians are bound to come out of the world and be separate from sin and sinners, so is the church. But while the duty is the same in both, the manner of performing it differs. Individuals are to withdraw from *disorderly persons*; the church is to purge them out—exclude them from her fellowship. The church, in her first organization, is composed of persons who have come out from the world, and separated themselves from sin and sinners; hence, she has no connection with either, for the persons composing her have none.

But Christians do not become free from their individual responsibility, by becoming associated in churches. They carry with them into church associations, their individual responsibilities: and whatever would be wrong in their individual relations, would be wrong in their church relations. Heaven knows us in our individual relations, and in these relations, and in these only, we will ap-

pear in judgment. Each will have to give an account of himself to God. The judgment of nations, and churches, &c., takes place in this world. At the judgment of the great day, the wickedness of associated bodies will rest on the individuals composing those associations. We are held individually responsible for all we do, whether in our individual or associated characters or relations. Our individual responsibility can never be lessened by entering into associations, but it may be greatly increased, and in many, very many, instances, is. If ten men fall on a lonely traveller, and take his life, our laws would convict the whole number of murder: each one would be as readily hanged for murder as though each had separately killed a man. In this case, but one murder has been committed, but ten men are guilty of murder. The guilt does not divide among the ten, but each is held by the law as guilty of the whole murder. And this would be the case had one hundred, or even one thousand, been engaged in the foul deed. The reason of this is found in the fact, that each consented to the dark deed; and we are guilty for all the heart yields up its consent to do, when clear proof appears that the heart did so consent: and the murder of the individual in this illustration, furnishes that proof. But, in relation to our final Judge, no proof is needed: He knows what is in the heart of man, and knows what we consent to do. We see from the great moral principle on which the



laws of the civilized world are based, that responsibility cannot be lessened by associations. But I have said, it may be greatly increased. If ten men may be all guilty of murder, by killing one man, on the principle that each is guilty of what he consents to do, had ten men or one hundred men been killed, on the same principle, each would be guilty of *ten, one hundred, or one thousand* murders; for each consented in his heart to the murder of all, and did his part to effect the awful crime. Now, if we are accountable before God for all we consent in our hearts to do, or to aid others in doing—and no doctrine I humbly conceive is more clearly taught in the Book of God than this—we are held responsible for all the wickedness done by churches, political parties, or other associations *with which we consent to act.*

This, my dear brethren, is an awful subject. I fear that human responsibility is, as yet, very imperfectly understood. The thought that we are held accountable for the evil done by those with whom we may be associated, is distressing, truly distressing: but it is *true, TRUE.* And it is to prevent these awful consequences, that we are so frequently commanded in the holy Scriptures to have no connection with the wicked—to be separate from sinners. Truly awful will be the consequences of disobeying these oft-repeated commands.

In the Presbyterian branches of the church, as also in the Methodist and Episcopalian, there is a

connectional fellowship which unites all as one in the true and proper sense of Christian fellowship, and this is also true of all church organizations not strictly congregational. In the Presbyterian and Methodist churches (I mean all Presbyterian and Methodist divisions of these great sections of the church), there is but one communion table, because these sections of the church are one,—membership in one place is membership in every place. He that brings a regular certificate of membership from Charleston, S. C., or from any other place, can claim his right of membership in Pittsburg, though he owned one thousand slaves—on that certificate he can claim his place at the communion table with our anti-slavery friends, and they have no right, or power, as Presbyterians or Methodists, to forbid him the sacrament with them. This simple fact proves that these churches have but one communion table, which reaches all through the United States, if not beyond them, and those who go to this table, *eat* with all who *eat* at it, i. e., all the members of these denominations in the United States. It is a very great mistake to suppose we only *eat* with those who *eat* with us, in the same place, and at the same time. This is true only of churches strictly congregational.

All Presbyterians, Methodists, and others, who have great denominational connections for legislation, judicial investigation, or government, have but *one communion table*, and he who goes to that

communion in any one place, fellowships as truly all who are admitted to the one table of that denomination, as he does those he communes with at the communion in the church where he statedly worships. Those who are strictly congregational, commune with none but members of their own immediate church; but Methodists, Presbyterians, &c., commune with all of their denomination.

The General Conference being the legislative department of the M. E. church, and that body admitting slaveholders to seats in it, every member of that church holds such a connection with slaveholders, as binds him to obey the laws they may make, and to hold his membership on conditions they may lay down.

The connections which exist in the churches just noticed, as also the connections with slaveholders, are inseparable from membership in any such church. Now, if slavery is sinful, slaveholders must be *disorderly* persons; and those who would obey the command in the text, and the voice of God, clearly expressed elsewhere in the Scriptures, have no alternative but to withdraw from pro-slavery churches; for they cannot withdraw from *disorderly* brethren, while they live with them—this is impossible.

Again: if slavery be an unfruitful work of darkness, we cannot obey the command to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, while we retain membership in a pro-slavery

church ; hence, we must leave such a church, if we are in it, to obey the command of God.

I will suppose a case for the sake of illustration. Ten of us unite in a church ; and this number might constitute a church, as truly Christ's as any that ever existed. One of our number commits a crime, which we, as Christians, are forbidden to fellowship—say, if you please, extortion or fornication. The offender is called to an account, and five out of the nine who try him, conclude to keep him in the church to reform him ; what must the four do ? They are, as are also the five, forbidden to *eat* the Lord's supper with the offender, to have any fellowship with him. They (the four pure ones) are required to withdraw from this disorderly person—to have no fellowship with this worker of darkness—and they cannot exclude him from the church ; hence they must withdraw, for they must have no Christian connection with the vile, impenitent offender ; they must leave the church to obey God, and save their souls. When a corrupt majority retain persons in the church, whom God forbids his *people* to fellowship, and commands them to separate—to withdraw from—his *people* must leave that church. God requires them to leave it, and they must be saved in disobedience, if they are saved in it.

Psal. l. 18. “When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partakers with adulterers.” No charge is here brought

against the accused party, that they had committed the crime of theft or adultery, but only that they had consented with those that had committed the one, and been partakers with those who had been guilty of the other. Will it then be denied that we consent with, and are made partakers with, any class of men, when we voluntarily unite with them in the same Christian church? If not, the text clearly condemns our association with slaveholders, and holds us responsible for their conduct, so far as we unite with them on terms of Christian fellowship.

2 John x. 11. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

This relates to false or corrupt teachers. The command not to receive them into our houses, is not intended to prohibit us from entertaining them upon principles of charity, as we would feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, but to prohibit us from entertaining them as Christians and Christian ministers, by which we might give countenance to their corruptions. "He that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." Dr. Clarke says the words "neither bid him God speed," "mean, according to the eastern use of them, 'Have no religious connection with him, nor act towards him so as to induce others to believe you acknowledge him as a brother.'" Taking

his interpretation of the words as correct, it follows that to have religious connection with men, is to become partakers of their evil deeds, and this every man does who belongs to the same church with slaveholders. Do not Methodist bishops bid slaveholders God speed, when they lay their hands upon their heads, and ordain them to the office and work of the ministry? And do not northern abolitionists bid these bishops God speed in their course, when they suffer them to lay upon their heads these same hands that have just been taken from the heads of slaveholders? And do not all the laity say, God speed to the whole operation, by suffering their own ministers to be ordained, and their own pulpits to be supplied by bishops that ordain slaveholders, and by belonging to, and supporting a church, in which slaveholders constitute a large portion of the membership and ministry? Those who can answer these questions so as to exonerate abolition members of pro-slavery churches from responsibility, will do their cause great service by exercising their rare gifts on the subject.

Rev. ii. 14, 15. "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrines of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." The charge is not for *believing* the doctrine of Balaam, and of the Nicolaitanes, but for *having those in the church* that held these doctrines; and the same principles make the church

responsible so long as she has slaveholders within her pale, and those that hold that "slavery as it exists in the United States is not a moral evil."

Rev. xviii. 4. "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues." This is spoken of mystic Babylon, and beyond all doubt it refers to some corrupt community. From it we may deduce the following propositions :

1. God may have a people in a corrupt community.

2. When a community has thus become corrupt as a body, God requires the uncorrupted portion to come out, that is, secede from the corrupt majority.

3. Such as refuse to do it, by such refusal make themselves partakers of the sins of the body, and render themselves liable to the punishment due to such sins.

Here is a plain and express command from God to his people, to withdraw from a corrupt church. And what are the reasons given for the requirement? That his *people* be not partakers of the fallen church's sins, nor receive of her plagues.

I take the ground, that when a church becomes so corrupted as to place its members in Christian fellowship with characters which God has forbidden his *people* to fellowship—which it would be sinful to fellowship—that church has reached the point of corruption, at which God's *people* must

leave it. And when a church tolerates, sanctions or in any way approves of sin, gives countenance or support to sin, they are also bound to leave it, else they become partakers of those sins.

We cannot remain in any of the pro-slavery churches of the land, without fellowshiping persons whom God expressly forbids his people to hold fellowship with; and slavery being a sin, and the churches giving sanction to the practice of that sin by approving of slavenholders as acceptable ministers and members, we become partakers in that sin, if we do not come out of those churches.

God's *people* were commanded to *come out of* Babylon. And what were Babylon's sins? She traded in *slaves*, and *souls of men*.—Rev. xviii. 13. Now compare Babylon, as here described, with the pro-slavery churches of this day, and you cannot fail to see that she was no worse than they are, if as bad. They who trade in slaves, trade also in the souls of men; for slaves are men having souls.

Trading in "*slaves and souls of men*," was Babylon's chief crime. What the members do the church does. This is especially true when the highest authorities of the church permit, allow, or sanction what they do. The members of Babylon traded in "*slaves and souls of men*," and the highest ecclesiastical body of the church, or Babylon, still allowed those who did so to retain their membership, as good and acceptable members. This tells the whole tale. And is not this the case in the pro-slavery churches of this land? It is.



The members of these churches trade in "slaves and souls of men"—have about TWO HUNDRED MILLIONS OF DOLLARS invested in immortal souls, for whom Christ died, some of whom are the members of Christ's mystical body, "bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh," "heirs to a crown of glory which fadeth not away;" these they sell like brute beasts; with "*beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots.*" Babylon did no more. Hell could ask no more. In this one particular, and the main one too, there is an exact agreement.

But it is important to our inquiry, to know if the slavery in which Babylon traded differed from American slavery; and if it did, was it more or less sinful? Mr. Wesley said that American slavery was the "vilest that ever saw the sun." He is good authority, at least with Methodists. But facts are authority with all. The period of Babylon's trading in "slaves and souls of men," must be one of two, from about A. D. 1000 to 1300, or from 1521 to the present period; as these are the only periods the members of the Church of Rome were engaged to any considerable extent in slavery and the slave trade. The slavery of the first period differed from American slavery in many important particulars, and the difference is all against us. Slaves, then, could be sold only with the soil; the soil and slaves could not be separated; where the slave was born, there he died. Under that system, families could never be broken up. Husbands and wives, parents and children,

could live, and die together; they could lighten each other's burdens by tender sympathies, by interchange of love. The wife had, in the hour of distress, a husband's bosom to confide in; the husband in his afflictions, a wife's heart to feel for him; the son, a father's council to guide him; the daughter, a mother's tenderness to watch over her, and a mother's bosom to dry her tears in, when heart-broken and afflicted. But none of these sweets mingle in the bitter cup in America. Here the demon hand of oppression seizes the web into which is woven all the sympathies and loves of social life, and tears it in pieces,—separates for life husbands and wives, parents and children, prostrates all that can impart any joy to human life. Then, masters might whip their slaves, but they dare not employ another to do it; all the whipping that was done, was done by the master's own hand. Now, the master may employ as many unfeeling wretches as he may choose, and by hired hands, whip his slaves to death. Then, slaves were admitted as parties at law, and could implead their own masters; then, law regulated slavery, and the slave could appeal to it in his own person, and obtain redress. Now, a slave cannot be a party in any suit at law whatever—now, the avarice, cupidity and lust of the master regulate slavery, and from these the slave has no appeal. Then, slaves were allowed their oaths against their master—now denied them against any white person. Then, the chastity of female

slaves was protected by law ; if a master offered an insult to the chastity of his female slave, she obtained her freedom by making oath to that fact. Now, if she does not yield to the criminal desires of her master, she may be whipped to death, if no white person be present, or sold to some distant land for a harlot. From these facts, we see that the churches of our land trade in a system of slavery far more wicked than Babylon traded in ; and if God's *people* could not remain in church relations with those who practised the less sin or evil, without being partakers of the church's sins, much less can they, if they continue in connection with the greater.

And now, dear brethren, I ask you to look at this whole subject in the fear of God, and in reference to your soul's salvation : let each one ask himself the question, can I be guiltless, holding fellowship with those who trade in *slaves and souls of men* ? Can I, dare I, sin against God, in remaining in a pro-slavery church ?

But it may be said *we are bound to do all the good we can in the world, and if we can do more good by staying in a pro-slavery church than by leaving it, are we not bound to stay ?*

It is true that we are bound to do all the good we can ; but it is equally true, that we can do no good by disobeying the commands of God. To talk of weighing probabilities of doing good in disobedience to God's commands, and to admit that it is possible to do more good by disobeying

the Most High, than by obeying him, is monstrous. This objection takes this ground: that though God says, "come out of her, my *people*," they have a right to reply, we think we can do more good by staying in, and therefore ought not to come out. God says, withdraw from every disorderly brother; the objectors say, Lord, I can do more good by staying with him. The Lord says, let certain persons be to you as heathen men; the objectors say, Lord, I can do more good by letting them be to me as Christian men. The Lord says, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; the objectors say, I can do more good by having the closest fellowship with them. The Lord says, no not to *eat* the feast of unleavened bread with fornicators, &c.: the objectors say, Lord, I can do more good by *eating* it with them. Thus the plain commands of God are set at naught, with the professed object of pleasing him and doing good; and not only so, we are held bound thus to disobey our Maker. And yet this objection is urged by ministers of the sanctuary, in the light of the nineteenth century.

*Ought we not to keep slaveholders in our Christian fellowship, to secure our influence over them for good?*

Let us apply the doctrine of this objection to some other sinners. We will keep drunkards in the church, to secure our influence over them, and make them better to their families. We will keep in fornicators for the same reason; if we turn

them out, they will give unrestrained indulgence to their passions, and treat their poor wives worse. We will keep thieves and liars in, to secure our influence over them, and to make them all good in the end. This is the doctrine which is brought to support slavery. But this is not all; if we should keep such characters in the church to reform them, we ought to take such in for the very same reason, and not only keep the door of the church open, but take into her arms an unsaved world, with all its abominations. And this is the practice on the subject of slavery: not only are those who are slaveholders kept in, but all who offer are taken in, if there be no other objection. According to this doctrine, we ought to have all the sinners in the world in the church, to secure religious influence over them. Is this the doctrine of the Saviour? No, verily!

*The church is my mother, and it would be ungrateful in me to forsake my mother. Ought I not to cleave to my mother?*

God's children are not orphans, they have a father as well as a mother. They are bound to obey their father, even God. Now suppose my mother should go a whoring after strange gods, must I forsake and disobey my father, and follow her? I trow not. Christians must obey God; and if the church become so corrupt that we cannot stay in it without disobeying God, we must leave it. I fear those who have so much to say about their obligations to the church, and so little to say

about their obligations to the Redeemer, are not the children of God—have not the religion of Jesus, but are orphans—have no father, are children of the church—have church religion. We are bound to love our mother, the church, so long as she is true and faithful to our father, God, but no longer.

*“Mr. Wesley was opposed to leaving the church, and preached and published a sermon against schism. Mr. Wesley was no seceder.” Why then should I secede?*

A.—Mr. Wesley in his sermon on schism preached the very doctrine here advanced. He says emphatically, that when a church requires its members to do something forbidden by the word of God, or places them in circumstances in which they cannot do what God’s word enjoins, or must do what his word forbids, then, and in that case, they are not only free to withdraw from that church, but are bound by the law of the Most High to do it, and to do it immediately too; and the ruinous effects of separation, which he portrays in glowing colors, lie all at the door of the church.—See Sermon on Schism, vol. 2, page 165, par. 17. We cannot stay in a pro-slavery church without doing what God’s word forbids, and leaving undone what it enjoins; hence, according to Mr. Wesley’s sermon, we are bound to leave such churches.

*If the fact that the sin of slavery is in the Church renders it a duty to secede, then the existence of any*

*other sin in the Church must force us to the same result ; and as there is no church which has not sin and sinners in it, how can we belong to any church on earth ?*

Secession is not urged because the sin of slavery is *in the Church*, but because it is *TOLERATED in the Church*, or because it is *knowingly and publicly* suffered to exist in the Church. Did any other sin exist in the Church, under the same circumstances, equally known to the Church and the world, and, by the *same toleration*, it would equally demand secession on the part of all those who are opposed to association with sinners. Take an illustration : Suppose we belong to a local church or religious society. Suppose an individual member of such church knows that another member is guilty of stealing a sheep—the crime cannot be worse than to steal a man. He goes to the church with his complaint that A. has stolen a sheep, but for want of proof, he fails to convince the church that Bro. A. is guilty, though he is sure of his guilt. These facts may not justify secession, because the church does not sanction theft ; they would expel A. if they were convinced of his guilt, and they would be convinced of his guilt, if reasonable evidence were laid before them. But suppose the accuser convinces the church that A. has really stolen the sheep, and they refuse, or a majority of them, to expel him, on the ground that *it is not improper for sheep-stealers* to belong to the church—the body then assumes the responsibility of sheep-stealing, and

every member who would not share that responsibility must secede. This is precisely the ground on which we urge secession for the sin of slavery; it is not because it has got into the Church, and lies concealed beyond detection, but because it is suffered *publicly to exist* in the Church, on the ground that it is *right* to retain slaveholders in the Church. If it can be shown, that any other sin exists in the Church, by the same *public toleration*, it will furnish another unanswerable reason for secession.

*It is sometimes urged that, if we are bound to secede from the Church, because it tolerates slavery, for the same reason must we secede from the civil compact, because government tolerates slavery. How is this?*

1. The principles involved in the two cases are not the same. Membership in civil society does not involve Christian fellowship, and is not understood by the world as endorsing the character and sentiments of the other members of such civil society, or the laws and administration; but membership in a church does imply Christian fellowship, and a sanction of the laws and government of the same so far as moral principle is concerned. We may belong to a church, and not endorse every thing on the ground of expediency; many prudential rules may exist which we may think are not the best, yet to belong to a church is to endorse its principles and government, so far as to say they are not wicked—but such is not the case with the mem-



bership in civil society; it is not so understood by the world.

2. If the objection be well founded, if it be true that if sin in the Church makes it our duty to secede, it must also be our duty to secede from civil society, because such sin exists in civil society, it must follow that we are no more responsible for the sin that exists in the Church, to which we belong, than we are for the sin that exists in the civil society in which we live. This is not only contrary to every man's common sense, but it must involve the following consequence. As, not only slaveholders, but as thieves, liars, drunkards, whore masters and murderers, all belong to civil society, we must either secede from civil society, or we are at liberty to remain members of a Church where all these characters are admitted. There is no way to evade the force of this but to admit that sin in the Church may render it our duty to secede, which does not render it our duty to withdraw from civil society, the same sin existing there, in which case the whole objection is given up.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS.

1. *By adhering to such a church, we violate all those scriptures, which speak of church order and discipline.* That Christian churches under the apostolic government, were designed to include none but Christians in heart and life, will not be denied, and that the Scriptures contain rules for separating the unworthy from their communion is equally plain. These rules are of such a character as to

prove it wrong for us to remain in Christian association with known offenders. Among these texts are Matt. xviii. 15, 17; Rom. xvi. 17; 1 Cor. v. 5, 9; 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14; "Let him be unto thee as an heathen man"—"Avoid them"—"Deliver such an one unto Satan"—"Not to keep company"—"Withdraw yourselves"—"Have no company with him"—these are all expressions which imply expulsion or secession, and prove beyond a doubt that, as Christians, we are bound to withdraw from the associations of all unworthy persons, or exclude them from our associations. This remark is to be applied only to Christians or church associations, the members of which, by the law of Christ and by the common sentiments of the world, constitute a common brotherhood. To remain in such associations with open offenders, as all slaveholders and their apologists are, is a direct violation of the law of Christ. It is worthy of remark that the language of Scripture sometimes favors the idea of expulsion, and sometimes secession or a withdrawing on the part of the pure. This leaves us to make our own election under the circumstances of the case, exercising our best judgment in the fear of God; but where corruption exists, we must do one or the other. Now in the case before us, the expulsion of slaveholders and their apologists is not practicable, as they are far the strongest party, and have the constitution and government of the church on their side, under which circumstances our only means of obeying the law of Christ is secession.

2. *By remaining in such a church we render ourselves liable to all the maledictions implied in those scriptures which hold us responsible for the associations we sustain, and the influence we thereby exert.* The following are a few texts of this class : Psa. l. 18. "When thou sawest a thief then thou consentedst with him, and has been partaker with adulterers." Slaveholders sustain both theft and adultery. Prov. xxix. 24. "Whoso is partaker with a thief hateth his own soul."

We cannot see how we could more effectually be partakers with thieves than by uniting with slaveholders in a common brotherhood to promote religion.

Isa. i. 23. "Thy princes are companions of thieves." If slaveholders be thieves, which cannot be denied, the princes (chief ministers) of the M. E. church are most notoriously the companions of thieves. Eph. v. 6, 7. "Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience ; be not ye therefore partakers with them." 1 Tim. v. 22. "Neither be partakers of other men's sins ; keep thyself pure." 2 John 11. "For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." Rev. ii. 20. "I have a few things against thee because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel to teach and seduce my servants." Was that worse than for the M. E. Church to suffer slaveholders, men-stealers, to teach ? Verse 15. "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrines of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate."

Was that worse than the doctrine of slavery? Rev. xviii. 4. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

And now, my dear brethren, having laid this most important subject before you in the plainest manner I am able, you must come to your own conclusions of duty from the arguments presented. I know the truth, in this case, has fearful odds to contend with; church attachments are powerful; we have many friends in these churches whom we love, and whom we ought to love; these it will be hard to separate from. In these circumstances, Satan will try to bind us to sin, the vilest sin, slavery, by the very cords which bind us to God's people and to God's church. Shun this snare. Let not feeling enter the mind while this great question is under examination. Make up your mind as to what is duty—what God requires. This done, recollect that he who hesitates between duty and inclination is undone. O! brethren, I feel for you! I tremble for you! There are few, very few questions on which it is so difficult to act right, as on this. May the Most High God and Saviour aid you to do your duty on this most important, most difficult subject, that you may stand before him at last, without spot and blameless, which may the Lord grant for his name and mercy's sake. *Amen.*

## M. E. CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

### SECTION I

#### THE LAITY EXCLUDED.

THE Methodist Episcopal Church has, for some years, been greatly agitated by a controversy on the subject of church government.

This controversy has resulted in a considerable secession from the church.

The people were never consulted at the organization of the M. E. church, they had no representative present; but a few ministers, of themselves, in the city of Baltimore, in 1784, framed the government without the concurrence or consent of the people, and have held with tenacious grasp ever since, all legislative, judicial, and executive prerogatives.

By virtue of this usurped authority, this body has imposed upon the church *articles of faith*, without either their advice or concurrence, and thus has interfered with the free exercise of conscience and the right of private judgment, on the part of the laity, and in respect to matters with which their personal salvation is inseparably identified. What more has the Roman Catholic Church itself done than this, in controlling the faith of its members?

They did not embrace and approve of this kind of government, in the act of joining the church, for

not one in a hundred, if one in a thousand, thought anything about the principles of government when uniting with the church, but were influenced in this act by entirely different considerations. Neither do they approve of this kind of government by continuing in the church, as a large majority in the church do not understand the principles of their own government, nor the government of reformers, or of the difference between them; and among those who are acquainted with them, perhaps there is a majority in favor of reform.

They may probably be influenced to this course from a number of considerations, foreign to the government; such is their attachment to favorite ministers; and unwillingness to interrupt old associations and attachments. Some may be influenced by the argument taken from *numbers* and *popularity*; others may think they can succeed better in their temporal avocations, and that it will best subserve their secular interests to belong to so large a community; others, again, do not like to leave the meeting-houses which their money has built; and not among the least, is a fear that the new church will not succeed—which fear ought now to be abandoned.

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## SECTION II.

## EPISCOPACY.

METHODIST Episcopacy was established by Dr. Coke and Francis Asbury. Mr. Wesley did not consecrate Dr. Coke a Bishop, as has been asserted. We have no proof that he ever made such an *attempt*—and had he done so he could not have succeeded; for he never was a Bishop himself. He could not therefore, confer powers he did not possess. But he could and did appoint Dr. Coke and Francis Asbury joint superintendents of the Methodist societies in North America.

Mr. Wesley did set apart Dr. Coke by the imposition of hands: but this ceremony, though it generally accompanies ordination, does not prove anything in itself. It was a ceremony which, in the days of the apostles, accompanied appointments to office, where no *ministerial function* was either conferred or recognized. It was also a common ceremony which accompanied the receiving of the Holy Ghost. Again, Mr. Wesley, as the father and founder of the Methodist societies, often exercised the right of sending his preachers to particular fields of labor, and in doing so, he frequently laid his hands upon them in token of his blessing; and this practice he professed to have derived from Acts xiii. 3. In one of his letters he thus speaks,—“Paul and Barnabas were separated for the work to which they were called.

This was *not* ordaining them—it was only in-

ducting them to the province for which our Lord had appointed them.

Mr. Wesley in his letter of appointment puts himself and Dr. Coke on a level, as it regards grades in the ministry. He applies the term presbyter to both. Mr. Wesley, as the father of the whole Methodist family, simply "appointed," "set apart," Dr. Coke to "superintend" and "preside over" a portion of his great family. This is all that can fairly be gathered from the commission of Dr. Coke.

Mr. Wesley gave (in this letter of appointment) as one reason for the step he then took, that the Methodists in North America desired "to continue under his care, and *still adhere* to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England.

We cannot suppose that he would violate his solemn ordination vows, by ordaining a Bishop, while he was only a presbyter, and also that he would trample on the discipline of the church to which the "people still wished to adhere," by thrusting upon the societies a *Bishop* of his own creating, contrary to the discipline of said church.

Mr. Wesley undoubtedly intended that Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury should ordain other Presbyters. The necessities of the case he supposed would justify, in America, this departure from English usage; but he could plead no such necessity for making a *Bishop*—believing as he did, "that Bishops and presbyters were of the same order and had the same right to ordain." He did not confer



upon Dr. Coke any additional *ordination power*, but merely set him apart to superintend the flock of Christ. Mr. Wesley did not anticipate that Coke and Asbury would assume and exercise the office of Bishops, and organize a separate and distinct *Methodist Episcopal Church*.

He expected both preachers and people would continue under *his* care, and "still adhere to the *discipline*" of the established church. And when Mr. Wesley found that his superintendents had taken the name of Bishops, he wrote to Asbury a letter, of which the following is an extract. "How can you, how dare you suffer yourself to be called a Bishop? I shudder, I start, at the very thought; men may call me a knave, or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content. But they shall never, by my consent, call me a Bishop. For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this. JOHN WESLEY."—(*Moore's Life of Wesley*, vol. 2, p. 285.)

It was not the *name* merely, to which Mr. Wesley objected; as the name was *scriptural*, he certainly could not object, as a churchman, to their being called by a name which exactly designated their office. It is ridiculous to suppose that after he had made them *Bishops*, he so pointedly condemned them for taking the *name*! Such a supposition is contrary to Mr. Wesley's whole character.

There is evidence that Dr. Coke never considered himself a Bishop in the Episcopal sense. He

appears never to have been satisfied with his Episcopal authority. He wrote a letter to Bishop White, dated Richmond, April 24, 1791, nearly *seven years after* Mr. Wesley had made him a Bishop, making a formal proposition for a re-union of the Methodists in America with the Protestant Episcopal Church! He wrote to Bishop Seabury of Connecticut, about the same time, making a similar proposition.

In the former of these letters he expressed the opinion that he "went farther in the separation" of the Methodists from the Established Church than Mr. Wesley intended—that Mr. Wesley "did not intend an entire separation"—that Mr. Wesley himself "went farther than he would have gone, if he had foreseen *some events which followed!*"—and that he is now sorry for the separation. How much does this look like constituting Dr. Coke a Bishop to form a separate Methodist Episcopal Church? These "certain events which followed," were, doubtless, the assumption of the name and office of Bishops, on the part of Coke and Asbury, and their consequent proceedings! In this letter, Dr. Coke styles himself a "Presbyter of the Church of England," and states that about 130 preachers had been ordained, and that the "very few, and perhaps none of them would refuse to submit to a *re-ordination.*" So much for the satisfaction of the preachers at that early day with ordination from Mr. Wesley's Bishops! In his letter to Bishop Seabury, which Dr. Coke read

to Bishop White, he suggested that in case of a re-union, "*there would be use in consecrating Mr. Asbury to the Episcopacy*—and that although there would not be the same reason in his (Dr. Coke's case), because he was a resident of England; yet as he should probably, while he lived, occasionally visit America, it would not be fit, considering he was Mr. Asbury's senior, that he should appear in *lower character* than this gentleman." Hence it seems that Mr. Wesley's Bishops were only Presbyters after all—and that to be *true Episcopal Bishops* they needed, in the opinion of Dr. Coke, a new consecration.

As lately as 1813, Dr. Coke applied to Wm. Wilberforce and several other distinguished gentlemen in England, for an appointment to the Episcopacy of India, and promising, if he could obtain that appointment, he would return to the bosom of the Church, and do all in his power to promote her interests. It is as clear as the sun, that Dr. Coke never considered himself properly a Bishop, though this appears to have been the height of his ambition. "If the less can bless the greater;" if presbyters can make Bishops, then has Methodist Episcopacy something to stand upon, though it owes its existence more to these *self-styled Bishops*, Coke and Asbury, than to John Wesley.

Mr. Wesley, in page 314, vol. vii. of his works, thus states the whole case. "Hence those who had been members of the church, had none either

to administer the Lord's Supper, or to baptize their children." . . . . "Judging this to be a case of real necessity, I took a step which, for peace and quietness, I had refrained from taking for many years; I exercised that power which, I am fully persuaded, the great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls has given me. *I appointed three of our laborers to go and help them by not only preaching the word of God, but likewise, by administering the Lord's Supper, and baptizing their children,* throughout that vast tract of land—a thousand miles long, and some hundreds broad." The same facts are referred to as the cause of Mr. Wesley's action in this case, in his *Life* by Coke and Moore. They there state "that Mr. Asbury informed Mr. Wesley of the extreme uneasiness of the people's minds for want of the sacraments; that thousands of their children were unbaptized, and that the members of the society in general, had not taken the Lord's Supper for years!" Again, in his own circular upon this subject, Mr. Wesley says, "For some hundreds of miles together, there is none either to baptize or administer the sacraments; *here, therefore, my scruples are at an end*, as I violate no order and invade no man's right by appointing and sending *laborers into the harvest*." This, then, was his object, and he incidentally cites the practice of the Alexandrian Church as sustaining him in the *ordination he performed*. Such a reference, however, would not have been revelant, had he ordained a Bishop, as the Bishops of that church were elected by the

*whole church, previously to being ordained by the elders. Can any one believe that, at that time, Mr. Wesley intended to assert and defend his right to originate an Episcopacy? Is there another place in his voluminous works, where such a right is even adverted to? We believe there is not one. It is evident that the sublime conception of Methodist Episcopacy had not then entered his mind; when it was forced upon him, we know how he expressed himself with regard to it.*

The case of Scotland was similar to that of America. The societies in Scotland were without any to administer the sacraments, and many members had been lost in consequence. Hence he says in his Journal, "Aug. 1, 1785. Having, with a few selected friends, weighed the matter thoroughly, I yielded to their judgment, and set apart three of our well-trying preachers, to minister in Scotland." Again, in his works, page 314, vol. vii. he says, "After Dr. (not Bishop) Coke's return from America, many of our friends begged I would consider the case of Scotland." Then, after mentioning the evil arising from the want of ordained ministers there, he adds, "To prevent this, I at length consented to TAKE THE SAME STEP WITH REGARD TO SCOTLAND, AS I HAD DONE WITH REGARD TO AMERICA!" The three preachers referred to, were undoubtedly intended to *superintend* the societies in Scotland, which were, shortly after this, divided into three circuits. So far was Mr. Wesley from originating any Episcopal es-

tablishment "to supersede the P. E. Church," that, in the same document, he (Mr. W.) says, "Whatever then is done, EITHER IN AMERICA OR SCOTLAND, IS NO SEPARATION FROM THE Church of England. I have no thought of this!" The "SAME STEP" with regard to Scotland as America.

If he took the *same steps* with regard to Scotland as America, and ordained no Bishops for the former place, is it not very strange that the ministers of the M. E. Church should *persist* in asserting that Mr. Wesley is the author of *Methodist Episcopacy*? It certainly is; and it cannot be accounted for only on the ground of *ignorance, prejudice, or dishonesty!*

It appears from "Lee's History of Methodism," that when the society was first organized under Messrs. Coke and Asbury, these gentlemen were not known as Bishops. The title was not assumed until *about three years after the organization, and then without the knowledge or consent of the conference.* We know, too, that *many of the preachers were opposed to the change,* and that after considerable debate a vote was passed NOT APPROVING OF THE ACT, *but acceding to the request of the superintendents, upon Mr. Asbury's explanation of the term to allow it to remain."* Mr. Wesley's letter to Asbury appears to have been despatched immediately after this, namely, in 1788. So that he lost no time in endeavoring to correct the evil.

Dr. Coke never was received in England as a Bishop.

About five months after Mr. Wesley's death, the Conference assembled. This was in 1791. Dr. Coke, who had been seven years a Bishop, was present. But he did not preside as Bishop, nor yet as superintendent. He did not *preside* at all. William Thompson was chosen President, and Dr. Coke, *Secretary*. The next year, Alexander Mather was chosen President, and Dr. Coke, *Secretary*. And the three following Conferences, Dr. Coke acted not as Bishop, not as President, but as *Secretary*.

Some of the Wesleyan preachers supposed Mr. Wesley had *attempted* to make a Bishop; others considered it a kind of Presbyterian ordination. They were all thunderstruck! The thing was done in a *private chamber*! One of the preachers when he heard of the transaction, said, "It is a new mode of ordination, to be sure, on the *Presbyterian* plan." Another said, "It is neither *Episcopal* nor *Presbyterian*, but a mere hodge-podge of inconsistency."

The M. E. Church holds to two orders in the ministry, theoretically; three practically. Methodist Bishops are inducted to the *Episcopacy* by a *triple* ordination. The forms for the ordination of a Bishop are more pompous than those of an elder. The pretence that all this parade is only to ordain to an *office* (not an order), is a miserable shift to avoid an obvious difficulty.

To admit that a Bishop is superior in *order*, would be to admit that John Wesley made a greater man than himself,—or that Coke created himself a Bishop, and then created the triple crown for Asbury. To deny that a Bishop is superior in any sense to a presbyter, would be to lower down the Episcopal standard—hence this dodging and trimming between *office* and *order*. It is a mere play upon words—a distinction without a difference.

As a presiding elder is next in office to a Bishop, and superior in many respects to other elders, why not ordain him? Echo answers *why?*

The Episcopal Methodists would never have had any doubts about a *third order*, had their Episcopacy come from a regular Bishop of the established church.

The *usages* of the established church are more consistent with her doctrine of a *third order*, than are those of the M. E. Church with her doctrine of but *two orders*.

If the bishopric is only an *office* in the church, it is about the *seventh*, in the room of the third.

1. Class-leader.
2. Exhorter.
3. Local preacher.
4. Junior preacher.
5. Preacher in charge.
6. Presiding elder.
7. BISHOP!

But the *bishopric* is the *only office* that happens to be ordained. Such an ordination to *office* merely, is supremely ridiculous!

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## SECTION III.

GENERAL AND ANNUAL CONFERENCES, COMPOSITION.  
POWERS, ETC.

THE laws of the M. E. church are made by the General Conference.

The General Conference is composed of travelling preachers.

The travelling clergy, by their delegates in General Conference, control the entire church both in respect to its "*faith and practice*," and hereby destroy the very foundations of all religious liberty, and provide a basis for rearing up an absolute despotism.

The members of the General Conference are appointed by the Annual Conferences.

The Annual Conferences are composed exclusively of travelling preachers.

No one can be elected a member of the General Conference but a travelling preacher.

No one can vote for members of the General Conference but travelling preachers.

It may be emphatically called a government of travelling preachers.

The local ministers and members have no representatives in the law-making department.

It is denied that they have any right, either natural or acquired, to representation. (See the report of the General Conference of 1828.)

The travelling preachers assumed the power to legislate for the local preachers and members.

It is upon such principles and with such powers, that the *legislative* department of the M. E. church is constituted; principles and powers at utter variance with human rights and the heaven-sanctioned equality of the Christian brotherhood. Look at it, reader, and say if you know of a parallel, either civil or religious, except among the absolute despotisms of the Old World.

The local ministers and members have no negative on the laws, which are to affect their property, persons, and reputation.

To object to, or reason against them, is called sowing dissension and inveighing against discipline.

The penalty annexed to this alleged crime of sowing dissension and inveighing against discipline is expulsion from the church.

Persons can be expelled by this rule of discipline from the M. E. church, without being charged with a breach of the laws of Jesus Christ.

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## SECTION IV.

BISHOPS AND PRESIDING ELDERS ; APPOINTMENT,  
POWERS, ETC.

THE Bishops are appointed by the travelling preachers.

They hold their office during life, unless removed for crime.

There are about 4000 preachers whose itinerant destiny is placed in the hands of the Bishops.

They have no appeal from the Bishop's decision; they must either go to their appointments or leave the itinerant ranks.

This places the preachers in a state of dependence on Episcopal power.

They can favor or oppress them, in giving them good or bad appointments, keep them near home or send them afar off. They may be under the necessity, sometimes, of learning obedience by the things they suffer.

The Bishops from these circumstances, acquire very great influence over the preachers and people.

This was exemplified in the General Conference of 1820, in putting down what were afterwards called the suspended resolutions, after they were carried by a majority of upwards of two-thirds of the General Conference.

The New Testament gives no account of such prerogatives being claimed or possessed by Bishops; and Mosheim, in his Ecclesiastical History, published by the M. E. church (vol. 1, p. 91), states, that "a Bishop in the first ages of the Christian Church, was a person who had the care of one Christian assembly, which at that time was, generally speaking, small enough to be contained in a private house." Again, in the same volume (p. 88), Mosheim says, "the rulers of the church were called either presbyters or Bishops, which two titles were undoubtedly applied to the same person.

The most alarming prerogatives of Methodist Bishops are—

1. Their power to gag and put down the annual conferences. This power they exercised from 1836 to 1840 on the slave question particularly. Their *right* to prevent an annual conference from expressing a sentiment by resolution or report on what they considered an important moral question, was warmly contested. The General Conference, however, of 1840, approved their course and gave them this power by *express provision*. This prerogative they have exercised since the last General Conference. Thus an annual conference of 200 members, many of whom are older, and perhaps wiser and better than some of the Bishops, however much they may feel impressed that they ought to express a sentiment on a moral enterprise, may be prevented by the Bishop, if he

pleases to pronounce the proposition unconstitutional or out of order ; and admitting no appeal from his decision, he may thus trample on the consciences of his brethren and do it according to *Methodist Episcopal law* ! And this is the *monster* which, if you touch, you are, in the opinion of a million souls, *piercing your Holy Mother* !

In 1842, at the session of the New England Conference, in Springfield, Mass., Bishop Waugh presided.

The following resolution was introduced, which the Bishop refused to put, and stated that it was "too late in the day to give his reasons" for such refusal !

"*Resolved*, That it is the solemn conviction of the New England Annual Conference, that all slaveholding, that is, all recognition of the right of property in human beings, is contrary to the laws of nature and religion, and ought therefore to be discouraged by all wise and prudent means."

How is it possible for a resolution to be more mildly worded than the above ? How reasonable that such a resolution should have passed ! How cruel and tyrannical the refusal ! As lately as 1842, a body of Christian ministers denied the privilege of uttering the above language ! Their rights and consciences trampled under foot by his Holiness in the chair !

And yet ten thousand preachers, travelling and local, and a million members, submit in silence to such treatment—to such a government !! The

same power and prerogatives which the Bishops have in the annual conferences, about two hundred presiding elders have in the quarterly conferences—and they have often exercised them.

No matter how much any people may desire a particular preacher—no matter how much the preacher may wish to serve the people ; unless the Bishop *please*, they cannot be gratified—and he don't always please, in such cases. No matter how much they may remonstrate against his being stationed with them ; if the Bishop pleases, they *must* take him.

I will give a few instances, out of scores that might be selected to show what a mild clever little thing this Methodist Episcopacy is—and how it regards the rights and consciences of the ministry and laity.

At the session of the New York Conference in 1839, it was in some way intimated to the Washington Street Church, in Brooklyn, L. I., that the Rev. B. Griffin was to be appointed to that charge. The church accordingly, through a committee appointed for the purpose, presented itself before the Bishop and remonstrated against Mr. Griffin's being sent to them as their pastor. But the remonstrance was disregarded, and Mr. Griffin was stationed at Washington Street.

At the session of the New England Conference, in 1841, both of the large societies in Lowell, Mass., petitioned for particular preachers, but they were told that they should not have the men

they asked for. One of the churches [St. Paul's] then requested to be left without a supply by the Bishop, having made arrangements to employ a local preacher. But the Bishop regarded not the request, but *forced* a preacher upon them. In both these cases, the preachers petitioned for also added their request to the voice of the churches so that the wishes of both preachers and people were disregarded.

Wesley Chapel Station, after being denied the preacher they wanted, selected some four or five others, and stated to the Bishop that they would be satisfied with either of them. But no; they *must not* have either. And to cap the climax of insult, the very man was sent them to whom they had *objected*, either officially or unofficially.

One circumstance connected with the Lowell churches ought not to be overlooked. In consequence of rejecting their preachers and electing others, they were publicly declared, through Zion's Herald, to be without the pale of the church. This was done by the two rejected preachers, with the approbation of the presiding elder, in a note appended to the Episcopal Bull. A very few who adhered to the rejected preachers, escaped these maledictions. This alarming step of dismembering whole churches without the forms of trial, developes another of the alarming features of Methodist economy—especially when it is considered that the subject was carried up to

the Bishop, and he approved of the course of the preachers and pronounced it METHODISM!

Thus the doctrine is established, that when an M. E. society *dares* to reject their preacher, it may be dismembered at a blow! Who can desire membership in such a church? True, these excinded churches, by reconsidering certain resolutions which gave some offence to the Episcopacy, were graciously taken back again, *en masse*, by these divines, with another stroke of their Episcopal pens. A new way this to expel and receive churches—but it is pronounced to be METHODISM! Good Lord, deliver us from such Methodism as this! *It is not Wesleyan Methodism!*

The Chesnut Street M. E. Church in the city of Providence, was treated by the Bishops in a similar manner, about the time of the Lowell proscriptions—viz., in June, 1841. This was a large church, and it had fixed on a particular preacher. The request was unanimous; but it was rejected. The consequence was a secession, which has resulted in the organization of a Wesleyan church, with a new and beautiful house of worship, all paid for, I believe.

2. The power which the Bishops have to transfer men from one end of the continent to the other, and that contrary to their wishes, is wrong. That they have *power* to transfer the whole or any portion of the New England Conference to South Carolina, and bring preachers from that Conference to New England, will not be denied. Bishop



Hedding has openly published this doctrine to the world. He says, in his address on the Discipline, as the only sure method of curing "heresy," and other evils, "Let the General Conference command the *Bishops* to remove the corrupted majority of an Annual Conference to other parts of the work, and scatter them among Annual Conferences, where they will be *governed*, and supply their places with better men from other Conferences. But such men would not go at the appointment of the Bishop. Perhaps they would not personally; but their *names* and their *membership* would go where they could be dealt with as their sins deserve. *It is true the Bishops have authority to do this, and in some cases it might be their duty to do it*, without the command of the General Conference."

What a tremendous power for seven men to exercise over 4000 of their brethren in the ministry! How dangerous—how contrary to liberty of conscience! And yet scores of young ministers are annually bowing their necks at the feet of the Episcopacy, and taking upon them "ordination vows," which oblige them to obey their chief ministers—without making any provision for the exercise of a "good conscience towards God!"

## SECTION V.

## RECEPTION AND EXPULSION OF MEMBERS, ETC.

Members are received into the M. E. church by the *preacher in charge*; and though this is generally (not always) done in presence of the society, there is no rule to prevent him from receiving members obnoxious to the majority. All the class leaders are appointed by *him*, and no steward *can* be appointed without *his* nomination. And all new boards of Trustees must be appointed by him or the presiding elder, except in those states and territories where the statutes provide differently. The pulpits of all the Episcopal Methodist churches, built on the plan of the discipline, are entirely under the control of the bishops and clergy.

The funds of the M. E. church, amounting to near a million of dollars, is the exclusive property of the preachers! Out of these funds the bishops are served first, and then their cringing vassals. The entire property of the church, including meeting-houses, cannot be less than five or six millions of dollars—probably more. The use of this vast sum is entirely under the control of the bishops and their agents—the travelling preachers!

In the trial of members the preacher in charge has the right to bring the accused before a committee of *his own creating*; and in case of an appeal to the quarterly conference, he can carry the

matter as he pleases—as he can change all the leaders, if need be, any moment.

Let Episcopal Methodists beware how they offend the preacher in charge, as he can dismember them almost with a nod. And the preacher must be equally cautious how he offends his presiding elder. And the presiding elder must take heed to his steps that he keep in the good graces of “his holiness,” as he is entirely his creature—and can be made his agent even contrary to the expressed will of both preachers and people. The government of the M. E. church is, therefore, a government of bishops!

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## SECTION VI.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE M. E. CHURCH CONTRASTED WITH THE SCRIPTURES AND THE USAGES OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.—TESTIMONY OF MOSHIEM, LORD KING AND OTHERS.

“In those early times every Christian church consisted of the people, their leaders and the ministers and deacons; and these indeed belong essentially to every religious society. The people were, undoubtedly, the FIRST IN AUTHORITY; for the apostles showed, by their own example, that nothing of moment was to be carried on or determined without the consent of the assembly. Acts i. 15; vi. 3; xv. 4; xxi. 22. It was therefore

he assembly of the people which CHOSE RULERS and TEACHERS, or received them by a FREE and AUTHORITATIVE CONSENT, when RECOMMENDED by others. The same people REJECTED or CONFIRMED, by their SUFFRAGES, the LAWS which were PROPOSED by their rulers to the *assembly*; EXCOMMUNICATED profligate and unworthy members of the church; RESTORED the *penitent* to forfeited privileges; PASSED JUDGMENT upon the different subjects of CONTROVERSY and dissension that arose in their community; EXAMINED and DECIDED the disputes which happened between the ELDERS and DEACONS; and, in a word, exercised all the authority which belongs to such as are invested with SOVEREIGN POWER."—Vol. 1., p. 37. Wood & Co., Baltimore, 1832.

Now of the six or seven things that the primitive members of the churches did, by authoritative investment, not more than one of them can be done by the members of the M. E. Church, and even that one is denied them by pretty good authority, as will be seen hereafter.

Lord King on the Primitive Church affords the most ample proof of the correctness of the foregoing quotation from Mosheim. 1. He proves that bishops were common pastors.—p. 27. 2. "When the bishop of a church was dead, *all the people of that church met together* in one place to choose a new bishop. So Sabinus was elected bishop of Emerita 'by the SUFFRAGE of ALL

THE BROTHERHOOD, which was the custom throughout all Africa,' for the bishop to be chosen in the presence of the people."—p. 37.

"In all ordinations all the people were consulted, and none were admitted into holy orders without their approbation, as is assured by Cyprian, bishop of this diocese, who tells us that it was his constant custom 'in all ordinations to consult his people, and with their common counsel to weigh the merits of every candidate for sacred orders.'"—p. 47.

Of the members of the primitive churches, Lord King observes: "As soon as they were baptized they commenced members of the church universal, and of that particular church wherein they were baptized, and became actual sharers and *exerters* of all the privileges and powers of the faithful. What the distinct and separate powers of the faithful were, must be next considered; several of them, to make the discourse under the former head complete, we touched there, as their election and choice of their bishops, their attention to those who were ordained, and such like, which will be unnecessary and tedious to repeat here; and others of them cannot be well separated from their conjunct acts with the clergy. As they had power to elect their bishops, so if their bishops proved afterwards scandalous and grossly wicked in life, or at least heretical in doctrine and apostates from the faith, they had power to de-

pose them and choose others in their room.”—p. 101.

“As for the judges that compose the consistory or ecclesiastical court, before whom offending criminals were convened and by whom censured, they will appear to have been the *whole church*, both clergy and laity; not the bishop without the people, nor the people without the bishop, but both conjunctly constituted that supreme tribunal, which censured delinquents and transgressors.”—p. 109.

“But as for the LEGISLATIVE’ DECRETIVE or *judicial* power, *that* appertained both to clergy and laity, who conjointly made up that SUPREME consistorial court, which was in every parish, before which all offenders were tried, and if found guilty, sentenced and condemned.”—p. 111.

“And whosoever will consider the frequent synods that are mentioned in Cyprian, will find that in his province they met at least once and sometimes twice or thrice in a year. As for the members that composed these synods, they were bishops, presbyters, deacons, and DEPUTED LAYMEN in behalf of the people of their respective churches.”—p. 132.

“When a synod was convened, before ever they entered upon any public causes, they chose out of the gravest and renowndest bishops among them, one, or sometimes two, to be their moderator or moderators. The office of a moderator was

to **PRESIDE** in the synod, to see all things calmly and fairly debated and decreed; and at the conclusion of the cause to sum up what had been debated and urged on both sides, to take the votes and suffrages of the members of the synod; and last of all to give his own."—p. 134.

"When a moderator was chosen, then they entered upon the consideration of the affairs which lay before them, which may be considered in a twofold respect, either as relating to foreign churches, or to those churches only of whom they were representatives. As for foreign churches, their determinations were not obligatory unto them, because they were **NOT REPRESENTED BY THEM**; and so the chief matter they had to do with them was, to give them their advice and counsel, in any difficult point proposed."

"But with respect unto those particular churches whose representatives they were, the decrees were binding and obligatory, since the regulation and management of their affairs was the general end of their convening."—p. 135.

In Dr. Ruter's History of the Church, published at the Methodist Book Room, we have the same testimony substantially, as that of Mosheim and Lord King. He says: "Presbyters were chosen by the united consent of their clerical brethren and the people at large, and ordained by the Bishops, assisted by the presbyters."—p. 26.

Of the beginning of the second century, he says: "The bishops and presbyters were still

undistinguished by any superiority of station or difference of apparel; they were STILL CHOSEN by the people, and subsisted upon a proportion of the voluntary offerings which were paid by every believer according to the exigencies of the occasion, or the measure of his wealth and piety."

The following scriptures show the part the members of the church took in ecclesiastical affairs, in the primitive church. Acts i. 15. The *multitude* were instructed to choose Matthias, to fill the vacancy caused by the apostacy of Judas. Chap. vi. 3. The multitude of the disciples, by the directions of the apostles, chose the seven deacons. Chap. xv. The important question respecting circumcision, which agitated the church at Antioch, was considered and decided by the *apostles, elders and brethren*. And the letter written to the church at Antioch, began in this Christian and republican manner: "The *apostles and elders and brethren* send greeting," &c. At the same time this assembly chose Barsabas and Silas, chief men among the brethren, to go with Paul and Barnabas, and convey the letter upon this subject. Chap. xi. 22. The *church* at Jerusalem sent Barnabas on a mission to Antioch and other places. The *church* did it. Chap. xiv. 27. Paul and Barnabas gave an account of their labors among the Gentiles, to the *church*; not to a body of ministers—not even to the apostles themselves. Chap. xviii. 27. The brethren wrote, recommending Apollos, eloquent Apollos, to the reception of



the disciples in the region of Achaia. Besides all this, churches sent their salutations to other churches—sent messengers to their brethren. 2 Cor. viii. 23. Luke was chosen of the churches to travel with St. Paul.

Ministers had some voice in the selection of their fields of labor, and at times declined to comply with the wishes even of an apostle. This is evident from 1 Cor. xvi. 12. Titus went to Corinth of his own accord. 2 Cor. viii. 17.

#### THE POWERS AND INVESTMENTS OF THE MINISTRY OF THE M. E. CHURCH ANTI-PRIMITIVE.

1. The government of the M. E. Church is wholly under the control of the ministry, and ever has been since its organization. Proof.—Discipline, page 8, giving the particulars of the organization of the M. E. Church in Baltimore, 1784. Those who composed this conference were *ministers*, and *only* ministers, though there were then in the societies in the states, 14,988 members. And from that time to the present, the only body claiming the right of making laws for the government of the church, have been ministers, and *only* ministers. There never was a layman admitted to an assembly in the M. E. Church, which was organized for the purpose of regulating its government; nor was ever a layman admitted to vote in the election of delegates who compose the General Conference, the law-making body. All and every alteration that is made in the Disci-

pline and government of the church, is effected solely by the ministry; and the only alternative left for the membership is, to submit to laws enacted without their being *represented*, or to leave the *church*.

2. Bishops are empowered with the prerogative of overseeing the spiritual and temporal business of the church.—Dis. page 27, answer 5. How much is meant by overseeing the *temporal* business of the church, the writer never knew; but as the overseeing of the *spiritual* business is an authoritative investment, the conclusion is, that it is the same in relation to the *temporal* business of it.

3. Both deacons and elders are constituted by a body of ministers only.—Dis. pp. 32, 33. In the case of local preachers, the quarterly conference recommend them to the annual conference, but no one can be ordained without an election by the travelling ministry of an annual conference; and in the case of itinerant ministers, the people have nothing to say in relation to their being constituted either deacons or elders.

4. A Bishop, or presiding elder, can either of them receive a preacher to travel in the interval of a conference, independent of the voice of the people.—Dis. p. 36.

5. Those who have charge of circuits, can choose committees independently of all the members of their charge, to appropriate moneys that have been raised for building churches, and pay-

ing debts upon churches.—Dis. p. 44, answers 17, 18.

6. The Bishops of the M. E. Church have the *absolute power* of determining the appointments of the whole of the travelling ministry, where and how *they please*; and neither the ministry or membership have the right to interfere in any manner whatever. This is the *right* of the Bishop *unchecked*; nor is there any possible means for the abridgment of this power by the people.—Dis. p. 25.

7. The power of Bishops absorbs all the power of presiding elders and preachers in charge. Proof.—They are *general* superintendents. A superintendent has authority to do by *himself* what he can do by another. This is universally true. But we are not left to rest the matter here. The proof is abundant from the Discipline, as well as from the nature of their office. When a Bishop is *present*, he is the first one named to do the business to be done. If a preacher is to be received in the interval of the annual conference, the *bishop* or presiding elder is to do it. Showing that the *bishop* is to do it of *right*, if present, and disposed to exercise it.—Dis. p. 36.

A preacher must have his license signed by a *bishop* or presiding elder; showing the same fact, that if a bishop is *present*, he has the authority, and not the presiding elder, to sign such license.—p. 37. Presiding elders have authority to try a travelling preacher *only* in the absence of the

*bishop*. The *bishops* have the authority in all these cases when present.—p. 65. In the trial of members, *bishops* are the first class of administrators named to preside, and then elders, and deacons, and preachers.—p. 92. Stewards are to be subject to *bishops*, presiding elders, &c.—p. 168. The same fact of precedence is here observable, as in the foregoing instances. The truth is, when a *bishop* is *present*, he absorbs all the power of presiding elders and ordinary ministers, unless it be in some trifling instances where the General Conference has, by special enactment, devolved some duty upon those in charge of circuits. But nothing is now recollected that is done while the bishop is *present*, that would form an exception to this statement. Now to sum up ; when a *bishop* comes to a quarterly conference, he possesses *all the authority* of controlling the meeting, by virtue of his *general* superintendency, which is made up of *particulars*, of which this is one. The presiding elder for the time being loses his authority by the presence of the man who *gave* him his authority. All the authority a presiding elder has when the bishop is in his district, is to “ATTEND HIM.”—Dis. p. 31. But when the *bishop* is *present*, he cannot *change*, *receive*, or *suspend* preachers in his district, unless by the *special permission* or *order* of the bishop.—p. 30. And when a bishop comes to a station, the preacher in charge loses his authority in the conducting a trial, and in all other instances, unless the General Conference has, by

positive enactment, ordered otherwise. In the trial of members, the sole authority is in the *bishop* to preside if present; next is the presiding elder, and then the preacher in charge. But of *right*, the preacher in charge of the circuit is utterly dispossessed, if the presiding elder is *present*, and *both* of them are without authority to preside in the trial, if the *bishop* be present. Now see how this might work in the trial of a member, should a bishop preside, and then be president of the quarterly conference. All questions of *law* are to be decided by the president at both trials; and in case of an appeal of this nature, it might be made to the same person at the *trial*, at the *quarterly conference*, and finally at the *annual conference*, should the bishop be *present* and exercise the authority with which he is invested. And thus, the very object for which an appeal is taken would be defeated; as it is a question that is not debatable, and in the instances here mentioned, it would be the same man who should decide in all the three cases of adjudication.

Let it not be said that this absorption of power is unprecedented, or too monstrous to ascribe to any good man in the M. E. Church. Mr. Asbury formerly possessed this power and more too. In the bound minutes of 1779, we find the following question and answer.

“Ques. 13. How far shall his (Asbury's) power extend?

“Ans. ON HEARING EVERY PREACHER FOR AND

AGAINST WHAT IS IN DEBATE, THE RIGHT OF DETERMINATION SHALL REST WITH HIM ACCORDING TO THE MINUTES."

8. The power of presiding elders, in their districts, while the bishops are *absent*, is the same as that of bishops when *present*, ordaining excepted. They oversee the spiritual and temporal business of the church in the districts. They have charge of all the preachers and exhorters in the districts. They can change, receive, and suspend preachers in their districts. And they are to take care that every part of the Discipline be enforced in their districts; as also to decide all questions of law in a quarterly meeting conference. A presiding elder is in all cases the representative of the bishop, and can do all the bishop could, within the limits of his district, ordaining excepted.

9. All the power the lay members of the M. E. Church possess, is the power to withhold their support from the ministry and institutions of the church, and, when a man is to be licensed as an exhorter or preacher, the class or society vote to approve or disapprove, when there is no leaders' meeting held in the place. But, as in most places there are leaders' meetings held, the practical results are, in most cases, they do not vote even here. And though the laws of the States authoritatively invest members of churches and congregations with the right of voting, in the election of trustees for holding churches, yet the Discipline provides, that in all cases, when new

boards of trustees are to be created; it shall be done (except in those states where the statutes provide differently) by the appointment of the preacher in charge, or the presiding elder of the district.—Dis. p. 167

“We know nothing of the right of the society to admit members into church fellowship; and the Methodist preacher who concedes this right, betrays his trust, and should be held amenable for delinquency to his brethren. We know not if this has ever happened; but Mr. Lee speaks of the contrary doctrine as a matter which is not questionable: and hence we have inferred that he, at least, practised upon this opinion when he was a travelling preacher; and, as he has done so with impunity, if he has done so at all, we have been led to fear that some portions of the church may be gradually sliding into a compromise which would so alter the relation between pastor and people, as to SUBVERT OUR WHOLE ECONOMY.”

“The admission and expulsion of church members by a vote of the society, is as absurd in theory, as it would be ruinous in practice.”—Editorial, Christian Advocate and Journal, Nov. 25, 1840.

Here we have the secret let out: that if the management of church affairs are so far under the control of the laity, as for them to admit members into the church, it would tend to “subvert our whole economy.”

The above contrast is presented to the consideration of the *thinking* and *considerate*, in the hope

that it may awaken to open investigation, and as constituting a *part* of the radical difference between the government of the M. E. Church and the primitive churches. The *italicizing* is my own. And this subject, but a mere outline of what might be exhibited,—a subject upon which the author has bestowed much thought—is now submitted in the hope that it may render some aid to those who are seeking to understand the character of the church, *built upon the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.*”

#### AN ARGUMENT ON LAYMEN'S RIGHTS.

In the Acts of the Apostles, xv. 1—31, we have a transaction recorded which bears directly upon the question. We will not fill space by quoting the whole chapter, and will only state briefly the principal points, referring to the particular verses relied upon as proof.

1. An important difference of opinion existed and a discussion arose between the parties at Antioch. The main question was whether or not the Gentile converts were required to be circumcised, but this question doubtless was regarded as involving the perpetuity or abrogation of the whole Mosaic Ritual. Verses 1, 2.

2. It was determined that a deputation should be sent to Jerusalem to lay the subject before the apostles and elders. This deputation consisted of “Paul and Barnabas, and certain others of



them." Verse 2. Who those certain others were is not clear, but from Gal. ii. 1—5, it is probable that Titus was one of them, who must have been a young convert at this time. The mission was undertaken at the expense of the church, for they were "brought on their way by the Church." Verse 3.

3. "When they were come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church, and of the apostles and elders." Verse 4. The church had as much to do with their reception as had the apostles and elders.

4. The question was brought before the apostles and elders, and the whole multitude for adjudication. That it was brought before the apostles and elders is proved by verse 6. That it was equally brought before the whole church and discussed by them as by a deliberative body, is proved by verse 12. "Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul." That the multitude participated in the discussion, is proved by a comparison of verses 7 and 12. The former says "there had been much disputing," while the latter says, "then all the multitude kept silence." Their keeping silence in the 12th verse, is the antithesis of the much discussion in the 7th verse.

5. After Paul and Barnabas had concluded their remarks, James summed up the whole subject, and stated his judgment in the case, which appears to have been satisfactory to all. Verses 13

—21, but 19 and 20 in particular. There is the same proof that the church consented to this decision that there is that the other apostles did.

6. They all united in communicating their judgment to the church at Antioch. Verse 22. "Then pleased it the apostles, and elders, and the *whole Church* to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely Judas, surnamed Barnabas, and Silas, *chief men among the brethren.*" The whole church sent these men as much as the apostles and elders did.

7. They all joined in a written statement of the decision, which they sent by them. Verse 23. "And they wrote letters by them after this manner: The apostles, and elders, and brethren, send greeting, unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia." Note, this letter was from the *brethren* at Jerusalem as well as from the apostles, and was addressed to the *brethren* at Antioch, and not to the ministers.

8. The deputation, when they arrived at Antioch, delivered the letter to the church, who proceeded to read it. Verse 30, 31. "They came to Antioch, and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation." In this transaction was settled the first great theological question that came up for discussion, after the Master had retired from the world to his throne, and, in its settlement, it is clear that the laity had as much to do as did the

ministry. This fact, that the apostles who were divinely inspired to settle the principles of church government, submitted the question to the consideration of the brethren, is conclusive evidence that this was the plan upon which the church was organized, and upon which it should be governed. The reason for such a course now, when ministers are not inspired, is much stronger than it could have been then, when ministers were inspired. What right can the ministry have to take away from the laity what was so clearly granted to them by inspired men, whose actions are admitted to have been authoritative? We trow not.

Acts xviii. 27. "And when he [Apollus] was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace."

The letter here given was a recommendation as a Christian teacher, and, in giving such a letter, they assumed the right of judging for themselves of his Christian character and of his ministerial qualifications. This right was doubtless assumed and exercised in this case by laymen. There is not the slightest intimation that his was a letter emanating from clerical authority. The letter was also clearly addressed to laymen, and not to some presiding minister, having "charge of all the elders and deacons, travelling and local preachers, and exhorters in his district."

2 Cor, iii. 1. "Or need we as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commend from you?"

This text clearly proves two things, viz.:—

1. Letters of commendation to and from churches were necessary for some other ministers. The expression, "need we as some others," clearly proves that others did need such letters.

2. The right to give and receive such letters is most clearly ceded to the church in the text. The apostle does not intimate that they had not a right to give and receive such letters when given by other churches, nor does he intimate that they are not necessary for "some others," but only intimates that such letters were not necessary for him and his fellow-apostles. They were commissioned by Christ, and had the power of working other miracles, which was a sufficient recommendation wherever they went, but others needed letters of recommendation.

From the two points made out above, a very clear conclusion follows. As such letters were given and received by the apostolic churches, and as the right of giving and receiving them belonged to the churches, it follows that the local churches had the right of judging for themselves on the subject of ministerial qualifications and character. The very act of recommending a minister, is the act of expressing our judgment concerning him, and the right to do this includes

the right of judgment in the case. This we see originally belonged to laymen.

1 John iv. 1. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirit, whether it be of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

Trying the spirits, here clearly means judging between true and false teachers. Those who are required to do this must have the right of judging what is truth and what is error; to them must belong the right of settling the doctrines of the creed. But this duty of judging between false and true teachers, is, in the text, clearly imposed upon laymen, embracing those whom the apostle calls little children, young men, and fathers. Chap. ii. 12, 13.

2 John 10. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed."

This text is precisely the character of the last, so far as its bearing upon the question is concerned. The duty enjoined is, to judge and reject a false teacher, on account of his defection in doctrine. This duty includes the right of judging what the true doctrine is, and what is false doctrine; and as it is here urged upon the church, not the ministry, it follows that the laity are judges of the doctrines of the Gospel, and are charged with the important work of preserving them pure.

Rom. xvi. 17. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences •

contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them."

This text proves that the power of discipline is lodged with the church. To mark and avoid in the sense of the text, must mean that application of discipline which separates offending members from the fellowship of the church, and this is as far as church discipline can go. Now as this application of discipline is to be made by the church, as the apostle urges the church to this work, the right and power of discipline must be in the hands of the church, and not in the hands of the ministry.

1 Cor. vii. 5. "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump."

This is a figurative expression, by which the apostle absolutely commanded them to exclude from their communion a certain corrupt member. What shows that the power to do it rested with them, is his severe rebuke for not having done it. Their power or right to expel this corrupt person, did not depend upon his command to do it, because, in connection with the command, he finds fault with them because they had not already done it. This view the preceding verses fully sustain.

1 Thes. iii. 6. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly."

Withdrawing from a brother means nothing

more nor less than excluding him from our church-fellowship. This the brethren, the church, were required to do, and of course they must have held the power of discipline in their own hands.

The above texts have been produced as specimens of the many which teach that each local church possesses the right and power of discipline, and are bound to exercise it. These Scriptures teach that the church is held responsible for the truth of the Gospel preached among them, and for the purity of their own body, which could not be true without the right of choosing their own teachers, and of disciplining their own members.

We will conclude this branch of our investigation with a few extracts from some principal authors. We will introduce a few quotations from a work entitled "A Church without a Bishop," by Lyman Coleman, author of "Antiquities of the Christian Church."

"The brethren chose their own officers from among themselves. Or if, in the first organization of the churches, their officers were appointed by the apostles, it was with the approbation of the members of the same."—Pages 12, 20.

"So universal was the right of suffrage, and so reasonable, that it attracted the notice of the Emperor, Alexander Severus, who reigned from A. D. 222 to 235. In imitation of the custom of Christians and Jews in the appointment of their priests, as he says, he gave the people the right of reject-

ing the appointment of any procurator, or chief president of the provinces, whom he might appoint to such office. Their votes, however, in these cases, were not merely testimonial, but really judicial and elective."

"There are on record instances in which the people of their own accord, and by acclamation, elected individuals to the office of bishop or presbyter, without any previous nomination. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, was elected in this manner, A. D. 374."—Page 67.

Our author gives a list of others elected in the same way, which we omit. He makes the following quotations from Mosheim's "Dissertations Sacrae," a work which we believe has never been published in this country.

"This power of appointing their elders continued to be exercised by the members of the church at large, as long as primitive manners were retained entire."—Page 70.

"The Bishop began in the third century, to appoint his own deacons at pleasure, and other inferior orders of clergy. In other appointments, also, his efforts began to disturb the freedom of the elections, and direct them agreeably to his own will. And yet Cyprian, only about fifty years before, apologized to the laity and clergy of his diocese, for appointing Auretius to the office of reader. In justification of this measure, he pleads the extraordinary virtues of the candidate, the urgent necessity of the case, and the impos-



sibility of consulting them, as he was wont to do on all such occasions." Page 71, 72.

"The Emperor, Valantinian III. complains of Hilary of Arles, that he unworthily ordained some in direct opposition to the will of the people; and when they refused those whom they had not chosen, that he contracted an armed body, and by military power forcibly thrust into office the ministers of the Gospel of peace."—Page 77.

"Leo the Great, A. D. 450, asserts the right of the people to elect their spiritual rulers."—Ib.

"Tertullian describes such assemblies [synods] as bodies representative of the whole church."—Page 115.

Our author makes the following quotation from Mosheim's work referred to.

"In the infancy, indeed, of councils, the Bishops did not scruple to acknowledge that they appeared there merely as the ministers or legates of their respective churches; and that they were, in fact, nothing more than representatives acting from instructions, but it was not long before this humble language began by little and little, to exchange for a loftier tone.—They at length took upon themselves to assert that they were the legitimate successors of the apostles themselves, and might, consequently, of their own proper authority, dictate laws to their Christian flock."—Page 115.

The writer makes the following quotations from the learned author Neander :

"From the nature of the religious life and of

the Christian Church, it is hardly possible to draw the inference, naturally that the government should have been entrusted to the hands of a single one. *The monarchical form of government accords not with the spirit of the Christian Church.*"—Page 19.

"Riddle gives the following sketch of the constitution and government of the church at the beginning of the second century. 'The subordinate government, &c., of each particular church was vested in itself; that is to say, the whole body elected its ministers and officers, and was consulted concerning all matters of importance. This is said of the church at the close of the first century.'—Ib.

"The mode of appointing bishops and presbyters," says Riddle, "has been repeatedly changed. Election by the people, for instance, has been discontinued."—Page 70.

"It is clearly asserted by Dr. Pin, that in Rome and Carthage, no one could be expelled from the church, or restored again, except with the consent of the people."—Page 102.

"Valesius, the learned commentator on Eusebius, says that the people's suffrages were required when any one was to be received into the Church, who for any fault, had been excommunicated. This is said of the usages of the Church in the third century."—Ib.

We might multiply these extracts to almost any extent, but will close where we are. Mr. Ccle-

man, from whose work we have taken the liberty to make such copious extracts, is versed in Oriental Literature, and has spent some years in Germany amid the musty records of her literary institutions, as his work gives ample proof. It should be remarked that all the extracts we have made, are sustained by references to the proper authorities, but as these are works unknown to the common reader, and several of them in other languages, we have omitted the references. Mr. Coleman's book is before the public, and if he has not quoted his learned authorities correctly, let him be called to an account, by the Literati.

Dr. Mosheim is endorsed by Mr. Watson as follows:

"The best ecclesiastical historians have showed that through the greater part of the second century, the Christian Churches were independent of each other. Each Christian assembly says Mosheim, was a little state governed by its own laws, which were enacted, or at least approved by the society."—*Biblical Dictionary*—Article "Church."

Mr. Watson is as high authority as can be quoted from among English Methodist authors, and he goes quite as far as we do on the subject of laymen's rights and powers, as will be seen from the following extracts:

"This declaration as to doctrine, in modern times is made by confessions or articles of faith, in which, if fundamental error is found, the evil

rests upon the heads of that church collectively, and upon the members individually, every one of whom is bound to try all doctrines by the Holy Scriptures, and cannot support an acknowledged system of error without guilt."—*Institutes in one vol.* page. 422.

This necessarily involves the *right* of lay delegation in all assemblies where doctrines and rules of government are settled. Our author says again of the power of pastors.

"We have already said, that the members of a church, although they have no right to obstruct the just exercise of this right, have a right to prevent its unworthy exercise."—Page 423.

This is granting all; for the right to prevent an unworthy exercise of power, includes the right of determining when it is justly and when it is unworthily exercised. Now if the laity have the right of judging of the conduct of their rulers, and determining when they act right and when they act wrong, and of interdicting those acts which they believe to be wrong, it is all that we contend for.

In Mr. Wesley's Journal for January 10, 1746, we find the following :

"I set out for Bristol. On the road I read over Lord King's account of the primitive church. In spite of the vehement prejudice of my education, I was ready to believe that this was a fair and impartial draught; but if so, it would follow that bishops and presbyters are essentially of one order;

and that, originally, every Christian congregation was a church independent of all others."

† These extracts might be swelled into a volume; but as copious extracts have been made from Lord King and others, in other parts of this work, they are omitted under this head.

From the above, it appears that the government of the M. E. Church is as contrary to the usages of the primitive church, as it is to the principles laid down in the Holy Scriptures. It is not pretended that any form of government is expressly laid down in the Scriptures; nevertheless the Scriptures abound with *elements* or *principles* of church government. The M. E. form of government is a gross violation of those principles.

The Episcopalians pretend that the great success which has attended their system of operations is evidence of the righteousness and utility of Episcopacy. "*It works well*"—"the Lord blesses it." So did that which is now the Apocalyptic beast, once work well. The Church of Rome was once pure—and much purer, when it was the age of the M. E. church, than the M. E. church now is. None but those blinded by ignorance, prejudice, interest, or the love of sect, can fail to see the *seeds of Popery* in the M. E. polity. Indeed, those seeds are pretty well sprouted already. The church is not yet sixty years old, and Methodist Episcopal Bishops have more power in *some respects*, than Roman Catholic Bishops! And the history of the last seven years teaches us that

these bishops have still an open field. They may assume almost any prerogative, and the General Conference will sanction their *assumptions*! And why not? Of what is the General Conference composed? Perhaps one-half are presiding elders—creatures of the bishop; and perhaps one-eighth are looking for some General Conference office; and then not a few of the younger members are looking for the presiding elder's office; and more are looking for the bishopric than ever can wear the triple crown. Is it therefore strange that a General Conference, composed of such materials, should sustain all Episcopal innovations and assumptions, and even authorize the bishops, by legal enactments, to continue their encroachments?

Never was there an ecclesiastical system so well contrived, by the dependence of all its parts upon a great central wheel, to accumulate power, and put down every opposing thing, as that of **METHODIST EPISCOPACY**. Hence its dangerous tendency, both to our civil and religious institutions.

If revivals, or the success of the M. E. church, prove the government to be right, then it would prove absolute contradictions; for while it would prove aristocracy to be right in the M. E. church, it would as clearly prove republicanism to be right in the Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist Protestant, and other churches, for these all have revivals and success, as well as the M. E. church.

Moreover, if this is a good argument in favor of any peculiar form of church government, it would be equally good in favor of doctrines; hence it would prove Calvinism right, Arminianism right, Campbellism, right, and every other *ism*, and by proving too much, destroys itself, and proves nothing at all. But the fact is, this has not been the ground of their success; no one has ever been awakened, or converted, or joined the church, because of the government, but have been influenced in this by their doctrines, the industry of their ministry, and the piety of the church, while some, it is to be feared, have joined the church from motives less praiseworthy than the above.

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## SECTION VII.

### PROSPECT OF REFORM.

THERE is no prospect that this church will give up slavery till *forced* to do so. As to her government, all efforts at modification and improvement have proved abortive; and the Episcopacy of the church never was established on so firm a basis as at present.

Attempts at reform were commenced about six years after the church was organized.

Two things have been aimed at in all efforts at reform,—one has been to curtail the Bishop's power, and the other to bring the influence of the laity into the councils of the church.

It has always been seen by a large portion of the travelling preachers, that if the presiding elders were elected by their suffrages, and associated with the Bishops by *right* in making out the appointments, it would abridge the Bishop's power over *them*, and afford them some little voice in determining their own fields of labor. To secure this point, therefore, has been an object with many of the preachers, almost from the first.

The secession that took place in 1792, with James O'Kelly at its head, was in consequence of the unlimited power of the Bishop in stationing the preachers. It was a very small abridgement of the Bishop's prerogative that Mr. O'Kelly and his friends asked, but the General Conference refused to grant it. The restriction desired was in the following words :

“ After the Bishops appoint the preachers at the conference to their several circuits, if any one thinks himself injured by the appointment, he shall have liberty to appeal to the Conference and state his objections; and if the Conference approve his objections, the Bishop shall appoint him to another circuit.”

After a debate of *three days* on this proposition, it was lost; probably through the great influence that Bishop Asbury held over the preachers, as it was understood that he was decidedly hostile to the measure.

At the Conference of 1800, another attempt was made to abridge the stationing power, by asso-



ciating a committee of preachers with the Bishop, in making out the appointments. This also failed. The same question was introduced into the Conference of 1812, and lost by only *three* votes.

In 1816, a *resolution* was introduced into the Conference to make the presiding elders elective, and to constitute them a council to assist the Bishop in stationing the preachers. This was also lost.

The same resolution, with slight modifications, was brought forward in 1820 and *passed* by quite a majority. After its adoption, however, the Rev. Joshua Soule who had just been elected to the Episcopal office refused to act under the restriction, and consequently resigned his office. Bishop McKendree joined with Mr. Soule in his opposition to the measure, and through their joint influence they succeeded, at length, in bringing over a majority to their side, and obtained a suspension of the resolutions for four years. In 1824, their suspension was continued, and at the General Conference of 1828, they were rescinded.\*

Thus an effort to abridge the powers of the Bishops, and continued for more than *thirty years*, was finally defeated by the *Bishops themselves*!

This effort was renewed at the last General Conference (1840), but met with its usual fate. The disposition on the part of the Conference to weaken any of the Episcopal functions, has

\* For the validity of the facts here stated, see Bangs' History, Vol. II. p. 330 and onward.

grown less and less from the time that McKendree and Soule took a stand for themselves and their successors in 1820.

There never has been a period in the history of the church when the laity have been universally satisfied with its government. Several strenuous efforts have been made by the laity, at different times, to obtain their just rights—but all to no purpose. Secession has been their only remedy.

The secession from the church that took place in 1828, was preceded by an energetic struggle for reform on the part of a large number of local preachers and laymen, together with some few travelling preachers. Of course the latter class, in any such reform, will be always small, as they are the party interested in sustaining the "*ancient regime*" of priestly prerogatives.

The reformers at the time alluded to, commenced their discussions in favor of the rights of the laity, first in the "Wesleyan Repository," and afterwards in the "Mutual Rights." They argued strenuously against the Episcopal form of church government, and insisted on a lay representation in the General Conference. Memorials were sent up to that body both in 1824 and 1828, to secure for the laity a share in its deliberations. But it was like asking the despot to yield his sceptre in favor of his vassals. In the report which the Conference made on the subject of the memorials in 1824, they modestly reply to the petitioners,

"PARDON US IF WE KNOW NO SUCH RIGHTS—IF WE COMPREHEND NO SUCH PRIVILEGES."

At the next Conference (1828) the injured people made another rally, and once more laid their grievances before the clerical judicatory. In answer to their claim, the Conference deny that the right of the laity to representation is a *natural* right, because, as they affirm, "the foundation of their rights in ecclesiastical bodies rests on a different basis." They also deny that it is an "acquired right" which they are entitled to, either on the ground "of becoming Christians or of becoming Methodists." And as the right, if it exists at all, must be either natural or acquired, therefore they gravely conclude that no such right exists.

It was with such logic that they justified themselves in the exercise of arbitrary power, and resisted the claim of *inalienable right* on the part of the people.

After this defeat of liberty in 1828, little was said or done by the disappointed and exhausted people to gain their right, until the Conference of 1840, when petitions again flowed in upon this subject. But the Conference had become so confident of its authority, so callous to the claims of justice, and so void of all sense of religious freedom, that it did not give the memorials a respectful consideration, nor deem the petitioners worthy of an honorable answer. It is true the petitions were referred to a committee and were reported on. But such was the manner of their reference

(having been first laid on the table), and such the report upon them (consisting of a peremptory refusal of the prayer, accompanied with a reflection upon the manner in which the memorials had originated), that the whole subject was treated with utter contempt.

This treatment has resulted in repeated secessions. Dr. Bangs tells us, in the History of which he is the author, that in 1791 (about six years after the organization of the church), the Rev. Wm. Hammet, a very popular preacher, became dissatisfied, and withdrew with a party from the church. He passes over this secession very rapidly, leaving us to *guess* at the probable number of the seceders. About a year after this, according to the same author, Rev. J. O'Kelly, with a number of travelling and local preachers, left the church on account of their dissatisfaction with the power lodged in the hands of the Bishops and presiding elders. "In the latter part of 1793," says the Dr., "they began to form societies, and *hundreds* of the people were induced to forsake the M. E. church, so that in some places *whole societies* were broken up." And he tells us that this disaffection was not confined to Virginia, the place of Mr. O'Kelly's residence, but extended also into North Carolina. Here, then, in about *eight* years after the organization of the M. E. church, Dr. Bangs tells us of *two* very important secessions on account of the odium of the government.

The next secession that he mentions, took place in 1813. This, he tells us, was composed of local preachers and laymen; several of the former, and a considerable number of the latter. This body, which originated in New England, under the name of "Reformed Methodists," the Dr. tells us, *"has long ceased to exist."* On what authority he makes this assertion, I know not; but I do know that the "Reformed Methodist church" still flourishes, and numbers in its communion about fifty ordained, and twenty-five licensed preachers, and two or three thousand members.

The next prominent secession took place in 1827-8. The seceders organized under the name of the "Methodist Protestant Church." Some thousands soon gathered to their standard, and at the present time they number about sixty thousand members.

Since that time, a multitude of smaller separations from the church have taken place, besides a host of individual withdrawals, both from among the ministers and laity.

In consequence of the pro-slavery character of the M. E. Church, and also the oppressive and unscriptural character of her government, after long and prayerful deliberation, in November, 1842. Rev. Messrs. J. Horton, L. R. Sunderland and O. Scott publicly withdrew from the M. E. church, and started a new paper called the True Wesleyan. The second number of this paper contained the withdrawal of Rev. Luther Lee, and the 3d

number, that of Rev. L. C. Matlack, one of the M. E. stationed preachers in the city of Boston. And from that time to the present, not a week, I believe, has passed, but has brought to the Wesleyan office the news of secessions either from the ministry or membership of the M. E. church, and generally from both.

A convention was called at the city of Utica, N. Y., in the month of May, 1843, of ministers and laymen, which formed the "Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America." This connection extends to every free state and territory in the Union. It has ten annual conferences, with from 500 to 600 preachers, and about 17,000 members!

It is but just to remark, that previously to the secession of Horton, Sunderland and Scott, a local secession had taken place in Utica, N. Y., another in Cleveland, O.; and also pretty extensive secessions in Michigan. Our brethren in Michigan had formed themselves into an annual conference, and were in successful operation previously to the above-named secession. They numbered, at the time of the Utica Convention, over twenty preachers, and about a thousand members. They now constitute a very important branch of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America.

The Wesleyan Connection is now in a state of great prosperity, and new recruits are weekly coming to us from the old church.

There are not less than one hundred thousand Methodists in the United States, under various

names, who stand disconnected with the M. E. Church, and in hostility to her government. Such an amount of dissatisfaction and disruption is without a parallel in the history of any other church in this country. And let it be noticed, too, that these secessions have taken place notwithstanding the strong bond of union calculated to bind the Methodist body together, growing out of unity of faith, homogeneousness of usage and religious habit, strong attachment to the early pioneers of the cause, and endearing relations, strengthened by a thousand delightful considerations.

With what expulsive power, therefore, must a system operate, that can sunder such bonds of union, and throw off thousands and tens of thousands from their connection with it! Must not such a system be *radically and necessarily wrong*?

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## SECTION VIII.

### LOCAL PREACHERS.

“If a local preacher be distressed in his temporal circumstances on account of his services in the circuit, he may apply to the quarterly meeting conference, who may give him what relief they judge proper, after the allowance of the travelling preachers and their wives, and all other regular allowances are discharged.”

Who can mark the terms of this provision, and not pronounce it a monstrous outrage upon justice, and an aggravating insult to misfortune? One would have thought that the conference which adopted it would have blushed for very shame in the act. It is, however, but another proof of the heartless and merciless character of absolute power. Mark; in the case alluded to in the provision, it is admitted that the local preacher is "*distressed in his temporal circumstances on account of service in the circuit.*" This, of course, would give him a claim in *right*, paramount to the claims of *all others* not thus afflicted. Yet he can *claim* nothing. "He *may* apply to the quarterly meeting conference, who *may* give what relief *they judge proper*, AFTER the allowance of the *travelling preachers* and of their *wives*, and ALL OTHER *regular* allowances are discharged!" If there is anything left, the conference "may give what relief they judge proper."

Thus we see that the travelling preacher must first receive his allowance, however comfortable his circumstances may be, while the local preacher, who "has broke down under excessive labors in the circuit," and is "distressed in his temporal circumstances," can receive nothing, unless there should be a surplus "after all other regular claims are discharged," and the conference should "judge proper" to bestow the fragments of its funds upon him. Alas! for the poor man, even on this ten-



ure ; for it is seldom that all the "regular allowances are discharged."

In concluding this brief notice of the local ministry, I would say, that though they are thus subordinated to the ruling hierarchy, some of the most talented, pious, and liberty-loving men are found in their ranks. They have always furnished a large proportion of the leading spirits who have undertaken reformatory measures in the church, though it is to be regretted that many of them are either too insensible to their own condition, or too regardless of their own rights and responsibilities, to make the necessary efforts to pluck themselves and the church from the grasp of a spiritual despotism. *Six thousand* local preachers, with such proportion of the laity as they might secure to their cause, would shake the fabric of Methodist Episcopacy to its foundations.

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## SECTION IX.

### INFLUENCE OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL SYSTEM ON THE REPUBLIC.

No one, I think, can have failed to see, during the course of this investigation, that republicanism and the Methodist Episcopal economy are perfect antagonists. While republicanism recognizes the right of the *people* to frame the govern-

ment under which they are to live, we have seen the government of the M. E. Church organized exclusively by the travelling preachers, without even *consulting* the laity in respect to it. While republicanism provides for the frequent election of law-makers, by the voice of the citizens, Methodist Episcopacy invests the law-making power in the travelling clergy, by a provision unalterable, *except by the travelling preachers themselves!* In a republic, the people also elect their executive and judicial officers; but the conference preachers in the M. E. Church have usurped both these departments of responsibility and power. In a republic, the public monies and public edifices are under the supervision of the sovereign people; but the vast funds of the M. E. Church, together with the houses of worship, with a few exceptions, are under the absolute control of her regular ministry. In a republic, the people choose their own public servants; but the Methodist societies are obliged to receive such teachers as the *bishops* may see fit to send them. In a republic, a man is tried for an alleged offence, by a *jury* empannelled upon just principles; but in the M. E. Church, the *stationed preacher* tries the accused member by a committee of his *own selecting*.

This series of particulars, showing the antagonistic character of Methodist Episcopacy to republican principles, might be greatly extended; but it is by no means necessary, since the most

superficial observer cannot fail to see that it has no one feature compatible with the civil policy of our country. What, then, must be the influence of this ecclesiastical superstructure on the American Republic? Must not its legitimate tendency be dangerous and destructive? With its *eleven hundred thousand* members, its *ten thousand preachers*, its *million and a half* of supporters, its central organs of information, its *million* of money, its archly constructed machinery, set in motion by the great central wheel of the General Conference, and extending its influence, by means of a thousand subordinate wheels, to every society and class throughout the Union, together with its *absolute head* in the persons of the bishops, render the Methodist Episcopal organization a most dangerous institution to the liberties of the nation. It is, indeed, far more dangerous than Catholicism itself; for the corrupt and liberty-crushing character of that organization has long since been exposed, so that the ever-watchful eye of liberty is always open to its dark plottings and jesuitical designs. But Episcopal Methodism is a Protestant system, sprung up almost imperceptibly in our midst, under circumstances and auspices which have, till lately, shielded it from public reprobation, and, for the most part, even from any general suspicion. Here lies the difference.

It is easy to see, that a people, trained under the influence of such a system, are poorly pre-

pared to appreciate the benefits of civil freedom, and consequently are dangerous hands into which to commit the guardianship of our free institutions. At least *one-tenth* part of the American population are either directly or indirectly connected with the M. E. Church; and when the consolidated and homogeneous character of the organization is taken into view, it must be readily discovered that the same political views must generally obtain throughout this entire body. The political power, therefore, of this numerous people, subject as they are to a *central control*, may be brought to bear, in any given case, with tremendous effect upon the destiny of the republic. A hint may be suggested by the bishops to their presiding elders, by the presiding elders to the preachers on their several districts, and by the preachers to their class-leaders in the several societies, by the leaders to the members of their classes; and thus a scheme may be extended, and simultaneously adopted, from one end of the Union to the other, in every society of the connection.

It is not intended by these remarks to intimate, that the church was instituted for any corrupt purpose, or that the present generation of her ministers entertain any treasonable designs towards the government of our country; but the object is to show, that when, under the influence of rapidly increasing wealth and power, and the despotism of its principles, it shall become *corrupt*, then

it will afford a most ready and efficient agency, by which a worldly and ambitious priesthood, joined with some intriguing and liberty-hating political party, may upturn the foundations of our government, demolish the temple of freedom, and establish an absolute despotism over the land. Such is the tendency of this system; and, if the result is not realized, it will not be from any want of adaptation in the principles which the system involves, but because the spirit of liberty will be too vigilant to suffer herself to be slain by its perfidious hand.

By tracing the parallel lines of civil and ecclesiastical history up to antiquity, it will be found, that in proportion as religious freedom has obtained, in the same proportion has civil government been administered according to free principles. Do we not owe our own republic to a band of religionists, who fled to the wilds of America to secure to themselves and their posterity the God-given and inviolable rights of conscience?

Is not the church of God to be the *standard of justice and right*? But are not the recognition and administration of justice and right, the essentials of civil as well as religious freedom? If, then, the church exerts her appropriate power on the community in which she exists, and does not at the same time sustain the principles of freedom by securing liberty of conscience to her own members, can we expect that *civil* freedom will

long continue? It is manifest that if the church exerts the power it is its province to exert, it will give character to a nation; in which case, if a despotism exists in the former, it will sooner or later sway its iron sceptre over the latter. If not, why is the spread of the Romish church in this country considered so dangerous to its liberties? If it is no matter what *church* organization we have, then let Catholicism multiply itself till it swallow up all sects and banish Protestantism from the land. Why not? Is despotism any more dangerous in the Romish than in the Methodist Episcopal or any other church? Does not the M. E. church, in effect, set up infallibility, deny the right of private judgment, and cut off the exercise of individual conscience?

In alluding to the rights of self-government, do not her authorities say, "*We know no such rights?*" And yet it is this organization, involving as it does principles at deadly war with inalienable rights, that is exerting a direct control over a large proportion of the American people, and by an influence, more remote, but not less certain, is wearing away the foundations of civil freedom itself.

The M. E. church not only exerts a dangerous influence on the liberties of the nation, by the direct and legitimate tendency of its principles, but also by the support which it gives to the system of *slavery* in our land. This church has taken the ground, either in her declaration or acts, that slavery, as it exists in the United States, is not a

moral or political evil; that is, that it is no evil at all. It has cast the broad ægis of Episcopal authority over the system as a shield of defence. It has prohibited the agitation of the slavery question, and enforced the violation of its edicts with the severest of ecclesiastical penalties. It has shaped its policy, on this question, according to the slave laws of the South, in rejection of the plainest precepts of Jesus Christ. It admits to its communion and ministry hundreds of slaveholders who hold in cruel bondage *tens of thousands* of their own brethren and sisters in Christ; and, to accommodate slavery, has disfranchised all its colored members throughout the slaveholding States of the Union.

In doing all this, and much more that might be mentioned, the M. E. church is giving its support to an institution which, more than all others, is calculated to sap the foundations of our civil freedom, and hasten the republic into the grave where lie the mouldering kingdoms of antiquity.

In looking in upon the state of things in the M. E. church, it does not require a very sagacious observer to see, in their incipient beginnings, the very corruptions of the Romish church. And as sure as the Bishop of Rome was ever vested with the name and power of a Pope, and as certain as John Tetzel, in the name of Leo X. bartered indulgences to sin, so sure the E. Methodist church, unless it change its policy, or is controlled by some foreign influences, will degenerate into a

Popedom, in which a cringing and degraded laity will be but the passive tools of a despotic priesthood.

The Romish church at the close of the *third century*, was not so subject to the dominance of the clergy, nor so liable to a reign of spiritual despotism, as is the *Methodist Episcopal Church* at this present moment.

The corruptions and usurpations in the primitive church sprang up *incidentally*, and were nourished by *circumstances*, but the M. E. church, as has been seen, has its *origin* in *usurpation*, and involves in its *organization* the very *elements* of ABSOLUTE POWER.



## PRESENT POSITION OF THE M. E. CHURCH.

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### THE COLORED TESTIMONY RESOLUTION.

1. The Rev. Silas Comfort, at the time a member of the Missouri Conference, permitted a colored person to testify against a white person, in a church trial.

2. For this conduct he was tried at the next session of the Conference, and convicted of maladministration.

3. He appealed to the next General Conference, and the conference refused to hear the appeal, thereby denying the right of appeal from such a decision.

4. Upon the top of this refusal to hear the appeal, the General Conference passed the colored testimony resolution, by which they declared that the admission of such testimony, "is inexpedient and unjustifiable." For this, it cannot be denied, the northern division of the church is responsible, for they had a majority in the Conference, and their leading men voted for the measure. Here the matter rested for four years, when the General Conference of 1844 repealed it.

### THE REPEAL.

1. The repeal cannot place the church in a more favorable point of light than she was before the

passage of the resolution. As well might a man or a community claim to be better for having done wrong. Granting all that can be asked, that the repeal placed the church just where it was before its passage, and it will be seen that it does not reach the case. It leaves them where they were, which is this; an annual conference had condemned a member for admitting colored testimony, and the General Conference refused to hear his appeal.

2. The repeal does not legally secure to colored members the right to be heard in church trials. It certainly could restore only what it took away, and it did not take away the right of colored members to testify, for they had not the right to be taken away. This is proved by the fact that an annual Conference declared it to be mal-administration to admit a colored person to testify, and the General Conference had refused to allow his appeal.

3. The decisions of the General Conference in the case of Mr. Comfort, fully settles the legal question, that it is mal-administration to admit colored testimony, and of course its admission must be unlawful. This decision was in no sense touched by the repeal of the colored testimony resolution, but remains in full force to this day. Thus it is clear that nothing but a little *show* has been gained by the repeal. The colored member has no more right to testify than before.

To conclude, if the repeal of the colored testi-

mony resolution was an anti-slavery victory in 1844, its passage could have been no less a pro-slavery victory in 1840. This is not a very glorious position, when it is known that such men as Dr. Peck of the M. E. Book Room, helped to achieve the pro-slavery victory in 1840. If those who voted for the repeal in 1844, proved themselves anti-slavery thereby, it follows that Dr. Peck proved himself no less pro-slavery by voting for the resolution in 1840.

#### ANTI-SLAVERY PETITIONS.

Nine Annual Conferences and ten thousand members petitioned the General Conference of 1844 to take action against slavery. Many of these petitions prayed for an entire separation of slavery from the church. The following resolution was adopted by a Methodist Convention in Boston, Mass., Jan. 18, 1843. It shows the wishes of the petitioners.

“*Resolved*, That slavery being a sin, and this sin in the M. E. Church, and the church a unit, nothing short of a SPEEDY and ENTIRE separation of slavery from the church can satisfy the consciences of *honest and faithful abolitionists*.”

After waiting a year, these brethren petitioned the General Conference, and their petitions were denied. A Committee on these petitions reported against granting the prayer, and the report was adopted without a word of debate. Are the authors of the above resolution satisfied? Are their

consciences at ease? Have they ceased to be "honest and faithful abolitionists?" There has been no "speedy and entire separation of slavery from the church," nor is there likely to be.

#### DIVISION OF THE CHURCH.

The M. E. Church is divided, it is true; but this is no proof of anti-slavery on the part of the north.

1. The division was a southern measure. The north did not propose it, did not desire it, did all they could to prevent it. But why did the south leave, if the north were not anti-slavery? The reason is plain, the north, to prevent her members "going over in troops to the seceders," took positions which offended the south. Though slavery was not injured, it was offended at the half way expediency course of the north. To speak in the use of legal terms, there was an *assault* on slavery, but no *battery*. Words! words!

2. The terms of the division are essentially pro-slavery; and these were dictated by the north. They fully recognize the slaveholding Christianity of the south. The preachers are allowed to make the election between the two divisions without censure. The north has pledged itself not to collect churches in the southern division. This acknowledges the southern division as a branch of the Christian church. Is the north anti-slavery, when it has handed over one half of the nation

to a slaveholding church for the safe keeping of their souls?

3. The plan of separation is highly oppressive upon minorities. Suppose portions of societies south of the line of division to be so opposed to slavery that they cannot walk with the southern church; they are abandoned by the north. The north has pledged itself that it will not take any pastoral charge of such portions of the church.

CONCLUDING PORTION OF AN ABLE

## R E V I E W,

OF THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE M. E. CHURCH  
WITH REGARD TO SLAVERY.

BY REV. EDWARD SMITH.

AFTER the question of Radicalism was settled in 1832, the question of slavery began again to agitate the church violently in the north, and action was attempted to be taken against it by annual and quarterly conferences; but the bishops came forward in its behalf, and refused to put motions in the annual conferences condemnatory of it, and the presiding elders did the same in the quarterly conferences, with a few exceptions. So that no (or next to no) official action could be obtained against it, even by way of testimony and remonstrance. This led to the formation of Methodist Episcopal Anti-Slavery Societies, to bring the subject before the membership, that they might have correct information on it. But these societies were not able to withstand the tide of opposition, and were, after a short and feeble existence, disbanded. Anti-slavery travelling preachers, who were active in the cause, were tried, some degraded, others gagged, and a number frightened back to their former positions.

The excitement in the church was crushed, and the subject to all appearance put to rest for more than a year, when a few anti-slavery preachers, having lost all hope of a reformation in the church, withdrew from it in the year 1842. They were soon followed by others, and steps were taken to organize a Methodist Church, free from any connection with slavery, which organization was completed in June, 1842. This little movement kindled a mighty anti-slavery flame, where the subject had been to appearance dead for nearly two years; three very large conventions were held in a short time after the first withdrawals, and high ground taken against the sin of slavery. Assurances were given by these conventions that the general conference of 1844 would do some great thing against slavery, and the anti-slavery members were exhorted not to leave the church, but to wait and see what the general conference would do. And many of them did wait to see the result.

Previous to this time, some southern papers intimated that the South would insist on having a slaveholder elected bishop. The new-born anti-slavery zeal which the secession of "Scott & Co." had brought into the world, declaimed against this, urging the members to petition the General Conference against it, and also for some decided action "to free the church from all connection with slavery," declaring that if the church was

not so freed, "it could not be a home for anti-slavery Methodists."

It was considered an easy matter to redeem the pledge, not to elect a slaveholder bishop. As the conference had a right to vote for a non-slave holder, the North, having a majority of votes, could cast their vote for a candidate of this kind, thus redeem the pledge given to the members, and on their return claim that they had preserved the high and holy office from the "foul blot of slavery." This much gained, would form a reason to hope that the rest might be, by the next conference, and the people be thus induced to remain in the church. But when they came to the conference, they found the "foul blot" already on the high and holy office, one of the bishops being a slaveholder; and how to get it off, meet the expectations they had raised, and keep the people in the church, was the difficulty.

The first plan proposed was to ask Bishop Andrew to resign his office; but this was abandoned, and the conference did no more than express their *sense* of what it was proper for him to do, viz.: "that he would desist from the exercise of his office so long as he might remain connected with slavery." Journals of 1844, p. 84. This decision was come to after about twelve days' discussion. No one offered to table charges against Bishop A. for a violation of his Discipline, or pretended that any rule of the church had been violated by him;



and when the conference adopted the resolution expressive of their sense of what would be proper for Bishop A. to do, they seemed not to know what they had done. The thing was "of doubtful disputation." And this has been the case with that church's action on slavery from the beginning. There has been so much doing and undoing, that it is extremely difficult to balance the account, or know what is done, or rather is not undone—what remains done. The South believed that the conference had virtually suspended the Bishop without the form of a trial and protested against the act as extra-judicial. The North appointed a committee to answer the protest, which answer was placed on the journals of the conference as the answer of the majority, by a vote of 116 to 26. This document took the ground that Bishop A. was not suspended, nor even tried; that "he is still a bishop, and that should he act, his acts would be valid." Journals.—p. 203. The other bishops did not appear to know what the conference had done with their colleague, and addressed a note to the conference, to know what should be done with Bishop A.'s name; what about his salary; what work should he do, or should he do any; and if any, how should he be appointed to it? This was previous to the vote on the answer to the protest. The conference, by a vote of 155 to 17, directed his name to stand on the minutes, in answer to the question, "Who are the bishops of the M. E.

Church?" with the names of the other bishops, and also in the hymn-book and Discipline, as it had done previously; and by a vote of 152 to 14, directed that his salary should be paid as the salary of the other bishops were paid. In these two respects, he differed nothing from his colleagues, and by a vote of 103 to 67, he was left to determine, by his "own decision and action," what work he would do, in view of the expressed sense of the conference. From all which we see that Bishop A. was not tried, not deposed or suspended, even virtually, nor even advised not to exercise his episcopal functions. He was left at liberty to decide whether he would or would not exercise them, and to what extent. The conference expressed their sense—did not give their advise. They gave the reason for their sense. The abolitionists of the North were ready to leave the church on account of her connection with slavery; and if a slaveholding bishop should visit the northern conferences, hundreds, yea, "thousands would leave the church;" and they thought Bishop A. ought to prevent this by not acting. Though it was perfectly lawful for him to act, it was not expedient in these circumstances. Yet they would not determine the point—they left this for him.—Journal, p. 118.

The action of the conference in the case of Bishop Andrew was the cause of the division of the church by the Louisville Convention. There was some complaint of the action in the case of

Mr. Harding, of the Baltimore Conference, but the southern delegates did not protest against it, or make it a ground of separation. See Protest, Jour. p. 186.

Now I inquire what were the matters at issue between the North and the South, which led to the separation of the largest religious society in the country? The North did not pretend to say that slaveholding was sinful, or in any way immoral, in Bishop A.'s case. This was not said by a single member of the Conference, in a debate of twelve days. They did not say that slavery was a *malum per se*—an evil in itself. This was not said by the body, nor by a single member of it. No new action was taken against slavery—no new ground proposed to be taken. Ministers were left to act as they had acted from 1800, and members as they had acted from 1808, in the matter of buying and selling slaves, and from 1785 in the matter of holding them. In answer to about ten thousand petitioners, praying the conference to take some action to “free the church entirely from any connection with slavery,” the conference replied that “it was inexpedient to take any action on that point.” The South asked no change in the Discipline to favor slavery, not even in the person of a single individual. The South were perfectly satisfied with the Discipline “as it is.” The North gave not the least intimation of a wish to have it changed. What, then, was the difficulty? Plainly this. The South

claimed for her slaveholding ministers, in the person of Bishop Andrew, the rights secured to them in the Discipline. The North denied them the enjoyment of those rights, purely on the ground of expediency. They claimed that if a slaveholding bishop should come to hold their northern conferences, their abolition members would leave the church by thousands. This would be a sore calamity. Expediency required its prevention; and if a slaveholder was bishop, he would have to travel at large, would have to come to the North and thus drive the abolitionists out of the church. Hence Bishop A. ought not to exercise the functions of his office, while their exercise would produce this effect—while the impediment remained. Both agreed that he had a right to be bishop—that he could rightfully exercise the episcopal functions; but one contended that it was inexpedient to do so, the other that it was expedient to do right, and that the North was bound to allow their Southern brethren not only the right to be slaveholders, but that slavery should not be considered as disqualifying them in any sense for the episcopal office. This was the true issue. It involves nothing but a matter of mere expediency; not a particle of principle is involved in the whole affair.

After seeing what led to the separation, we see at once how far they are apart.—The North takes the discipline "as it is," proposing no change on the subject of slavery. The South adopted it in

the very same way at the Louisville Convention. Neither intimated a wish for anything not in the discipline, nor expressed dissatisfaction with anything therein contained. The North will not agree that a slaveholder shall enjoy his disciplinary right in the office of a bishop, but he may in every other office or station in the church. The South claim for the slaveholder the exercise of his disciplinary rights in every station. The North do not make the refusal of right a matter of principle, but of expediency. All the North asks is not to have a slaveholder in the episcopacy; not because the discipline forbids it, but because it is inexpedient. This is what the North asks; this is what the South refuses. On this single point they are apart—on everything else together. This is the true state of the case, and we may truly exclaim, “Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth.”

The General Conference of 1840 decided that slaveholders had a disciplinary right to the office of bishop, in passing the following resolution:—

“Resolved, by the delegates of the several annual conferences, in General Conference assembled, That under the provisional exception of the general rule of the church, on the subject of slavery, the simple holding of slaves, or mere ownership of slave property in states or territories where the laws do not admit of emancipation, and the liberated slave to enjoy his freedom, constitutes no legal barrier to the election or ordination of ministers to the various grades of office

now in the ministry of the M. E. Church; and cannot, therefore, be considered as operating any forfeiture of right in view of such election and ordination." [See Journals of 1840, p. 171.]

This resolution gives the sense of the General Conference of 1840, which resolution was not asked to be rescinded at the conference of 1844; by which it appears that, the General Conference being judge, slaveholders may be rightfully elected and ordained to any grade of office in the M. E. Church, in those states which forbid emancipation, or deny the liberated slave to enjoy his freedom.

I come next to consider the connection of the northern portion of the church with slavery. After the southern protest was presented, containing a declaration that the South could not submit longer to the violation of their rights, a committee of nine was appointed to report a plan of separation.—This committee reported twelve resolutions, which were adopted. The first bears on the point in hand, and reads as follows:—"That should the annual conferences in the slaveholding states, find it necessary to unite in a distinct ecclesiastical connection, the following rule shall be observed with regard to the northern boundary of such connection: All the societies, stations, and conferences adhering to the church in the South, by a vote of the majority of the members of said societies, stations, and conferences, shall remain under the unmolested pastoral care of the

southern church; and the ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church shall in no wise attempt to organize churches or societies within the limits of the church south; nor shall they attempt to exercise any pastoral oversight therein. It being understood that the ministry of the South reciprocally observe the same rule in relation to stations, societies, and conferences, adhering, by a vote of a majority, to the Methodist Episcopal Church; provided also, that this rule shall apply only to societies, stations, and conferences bordering on the line of division, and not to interior charges, which shall in all cases be left to the care of that church within whose territory they are situated." [Journals of 1844, p. 135.]

The first thing worthy of notice in this resolution, is the fact that the conferences in the slaveholding states were made the judges of the necessity for division; and from their decision there is no appeal. They were authorized, by a vote of 147 to 22, to decide this question, and to organize a separate connection. They have decided in favor of division, and have organized a separate connection. The delegates appointed the time for the organizing convention, should the annual conferences find it necessary to hold such a convention. This was not determining the question, but submitting it to the annual conferences for their decision; and every conference in the slave states determined in favor of the convention, and sent dele-

gates to it. These delegates decided, with but three dissenting voices, to form a separate connection. The South has done what the General Conference authorized them to do, and in the very way prescribed. The South has not acted schismatically, but by the authority and direction of the General Conference.

*Second.*—The societies, sections and conferences bordering on the line of division, have the right to determine, by a vote, whether they will belong to the North or the South. The conferences authorized to form the southern church, were the conferences in the slaveholding states, and none else. There are four conferences, part in slave states and part in free states, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Pittsburgh and Ohio. These four include the states of Delaware, Maryland, and two-thirds of Virginia. All these remain in the North. The Virginia, Holston, Kentucky, and Missouri conferences border on the south side of the line, and have a right to come to the north, and thus extend the southern line of the northern church, so as to embrace five slave states and part of a sixth; this can be done. The societies and stations on either side of the line can choose which division they will belong to; and after all these choices are made, the northern church will include two whole slave states, and two-thirds of a third; and it may include much more. The slave territory which will be certainly included in the northern church, contains at least, according to the minutes



of 1843-1844, twenty-seven thousand slave members of the church; one-sixth of all the slaves in the whole church, and about the same proportion of slaveholders. There are about twenty-five thousand slaveholders in the whole church; and if there are as many slaveholders, in proportion to the slave population in the slave territory, included in the northern church as in the southern, there are four thousand in the northern church; but if but half as many, then the northern church contains two thousand; and there are unquestionably half as many; so that the north is, and will continue to be, just as much connected with slavery as she was before the separation.

The only difference is, there are not so many slaveholders in the northern M. E. church, but the fellowship of slaveholders is as actual and as sinful. If ever the connection of the M. E. church was sinful, it is so yet. The north did not ask for the division; did not want it—hoped to the last it would not take place. [See Journals of 1844, page 210.] The northern papers have deprecated it—insisted that there was no cause for it. The north asked not to be freed from church connection with slavery—from the fellowship of slaveholders—hoped to the last they might not be thus freed—did all they could to continue slaveholders in their brotherly embrace, except to agree that a slaveholding bishop should come to the north and drive the abolitionists out of the church. But the south could not agree to

be hugged in the same bosom with abolitionists, and to free themselves from connection with those who believed slavery sinful, and must therefore continue to agitate the subject, or become wicked, by making peace with sin, asked and obtained a separate church. And as their object was to be freed from the agitation of abolition, they had the line run to secure that object, throwing a large break-water of slave territory in the northern church, to keep the floods of abolition from coming down on them.

Both churches are connected with slavery in the very same way, by the provision of the very same discipline. Slaveholding members and local preachers have the same security in both; but travelling preachers and bishops may not be allowed, on the ground of expediency, to be connected with it to the same extent in the northern church; they may in the southern one: this is all the difference. Both are slaveholding churches. The northern church contains both slaveholders and abolitionists, the southern are free from abolitionists: This is the true state of the case.

*Third.*—This resolution provides that when the line shall finally be determined, the preachers of the northern church shall “in no wise attempt to organize churches” or “exercise any pastoral oversight” within the bounds of the southern church. This provision gives the slaves up forever to the ministry of the slaveholders, and a slaveholding church, binds thousands of minis-

ters not to obey the Saviour, in going into all the world to preach his gospel. The abolitionists of the north do well to prate about their anti-slavery, their love for the slave, after binding themselves by a covenant never to preach to them glad tidings the opening of the prison doors, and the acceptable year of the Lord, though Providence should open the way so to do. It is most likely that the General Conference of 1848, will disannul this restriction; at least, there are such intimations. This provision is one of the most remarkable acts on record, and will burn the brands of infamy deeper and deeper into the characters of those who passed it, while their memories live. And, strange to tell, there were 147 votes for this covenant to disobey Christ, and only 22 against it. Not a single voice was against it from the New England or New Hampshire conferences; and but 19 in all from the free States, three of the 22 being from the Baltimore conference. I esteem this act more dishonoring to God, if possible, than a connection with slavery; but the northern church is in for both, and on decidedly more unchristian grounds than she was ever before the division.

The second resolution provides "that ministers," local and travelling of every grade and office, may remain in the northern church, or, *without blame* attach themselves to the church south. This acknowledges the southern church as equally Christian with that of the north; for were it not so,

ministers would be blameable for going from a better to a worse. This passed by a vote of 139 to 17.

The third resolution recommends, for the concurrence of the Annual Conferences, an alteration of the sixth restrictive rule, so as to enable the church south, to get an equal proportion of the Book Concern and chartered fund. This passed by a vote of 147 to 12.

The ninth resolution relinquishes all claim of the M. E. church to the meeting-houses, parsonages, seminaries, colleges, school and conference funds, in the bounds of the southern church.

From these several actions it appears that the General Conference fully agreed for the south to separate and form a distinct church; and that if the south should go off, they should go full-handed. All the church property in the south was given up in favor of a southern organization; and by a vote of 117 to 12 it was agreed that they should have their full share of the book concern and chartered fund, if the Annual Conferences consent. I have been particular in the examination of this point, to prove, beyond a doubt, that the north fully consented to let the south form a new church; that the Louisville convention was fully authorized by the General Conference of 1844 to do what it did do; that it was, in no proper sense of the term, either disorderly or schismatical, that the division was by mutual consent; and that the church south, can rightfully claim all the

guarantees given them in the twelve resolutions, which provided prospectively for said organization. The convention kept "strictly within the records."

The required majorities of the several Annual Conferences, did not concur in the recommendation to alter the restrictive rule, to let the southern church have their proportion of the Book Concern and chartered fund: but they may do it yet; some think they will, but I have no expectation that it will be done. As the matter now stands, these concerns with their vast wealth belong exclusively to the northern church. Some of the northern conferences refused, because of the provision binding the ministers in the north never to "attempt" to form societies in the bounds of the church south, or exercise any pastoral duties there. But this point was not sent down to the Annual Conferences for their action, but was settled by the General Conference, and therefore formed no reason for their action, unless it was to prevent this monstrous thing by defeating the southern organization, as the south might not leave unless they could get their share of these concerns. But they have left without their dividend; and this odious provision stands in full force, and the northern church is bound to abide by it—bound by a vote of 147 to 12.

The last thing claiming attention is the influence of the separation on the subject of slavery. It has been confidently asserted by a number of Epis-

copal Methodist preachers, that the northern church is now free from any connection with slavery. Indeed, from what I have been able to learn, they generally make this declaration. But the facts previously noticed, prove that these preachers are either very ignorant or very dishonest, for they affirm what is most palpably untrue. Many think that the northern church, being now separated from that portion of the south which is most zealous in the defence of slavery, and in connection with the portion which admits it to be an evil, wrong in some sense, will from the nature of their position, become more and more anti-slavery, until she become fully abolitionised; and then slavery will be removed from her pale. This theory looks plausible at first sight, and no one would rejoice more than the writer should this be the case. But he cannot shut his eyes to the evidence, which shows plainly that the very opposite will be the effect; that the tone of anti-slavery will become less and less in the northern church.

The border conferences and societies are in a position to induce the northern church to make effort to gain them over; to do which she must yield her professed opposition to slavery. This is obvious; and in the very same proportion that she will be influenced to make proselytes, she will be influenced to give up her apparent opposition to slavery; for this must be done, before the other can be done; and by all that the North will be

tempted to swell her numbers, enlarge her borders, and extend her dominions South, she will be tempted to abate her opposition to slavery. And it is almost certain she will yield to this powerful temptation, and slaveholding go unrebuked in both churches. There are many more chances that the division will promote the interest of slavery, than it will favor the cause of freedom. There is little or no hope for the slave in this mighty division.

“Coming events (often) cast their shadows before,” and the bodies of future events are already seen by the shadows. The Providence annual conference at its session since the convention, passed the following resolutions, with only four dissenting votes:

“1. *Resolved*, That we are satisfied with the discipline of the church as it now is, on the subject of slavery; and as we have never proposed any alteration in it, neither do we now; and that in connection with our brethren of other conferences, we will ever abide by it.

“2. *Resolved*, That we have entire confidence in the anti-slavery character of our brethren of the Baltimore Conference; that we greatly rejoice that they stand where they have ever stood, upon true Methodist ground; that we deeply sympathize with them in all their trials, which have arisen out of their resolution to maintain their integrity; and that we pledge ourselves to

abide by them in their support of Methodism, as transmitted to us by the fathers."

Hence we have the position of the most orthodox New England Episcopal Methodist anti-slavery. The position of the very heart. No change in the discipline on the subject of slavery; never did want any. The discipline "as it is." No objections to the provisions which allow members and local preachers to hold slaves; to buy and sell slaves, (if they do not engage in a general slave trade; they are not allowed to buy and sell "men, women, and children,") and travelling preachers to do the same thing, where the laws of the State forbid emancipation, which is in by far the greater number of the States. This is all right, just as it should be. They want no change in any of these respects; never did want any; local preachers and members may hold as many slaves as they want, buy and sell, where, when, and to whom they please, if they stop short of buying and selling men, women, and children; and travelling preachers may do the same in the greater part of the slave states. The anti-slavery character of the Baltimore Conference is just the thing. New England wants no better anti-slavery. The conference stands, and ever has stood, on true Methodist ground. The members of the church in that conference hold slaves, and buy and sell slaves; I knew one who owned about seventy. The local preachers own slaves; I knew one who owned about sixty. This is true



Methodist anti-slavery ground. New-England anti-slavery being judge; by this it is pledged to stand, and ask no change. It is true that conference would not let Mr. Harding be a travelling preacher unless he free his slaves, because he lived in Maryland, where he could emancipate them; but they made him a local preacher, in possession of his slaves. This is Methodism, "as transmitted to us by the fathers," by which the Providence Conference is pledged to abide.

Was this the anti-slavery of the New England Conference in 1839, when they wanted the general rule so altered as to make slaveholding a term of membership? And of the great anti-slavery convention of 1843, which resolved that if the General Conference of 1844 did not entirely separate the church from all connection with slavery, it would be no longer a home for anti-slavery Methodists? How are the mighty fallen! The Providence Conference have given up every particle of modern abolitionism they ever had; and have measured their whole length to the proslavery of the Discipline—have sanctioned all the extreme South asks, with one exception, a slaveholding bishop.

In view of all these facts and reasonings, and the conclusions to which they irresistably bring us, what is the duty of anti-slavery Methodists? Many of them have felt and said that they could not, without violating the plain commands of God, remain in church fellowship with slave-

holders any longer than there was a reasonable prospect of removing them from the church. Now that there is no reasonable prospect of doing this, and no prospect at all, and a reasonable, if not certain prospect, that the church will be far less anti-slavery in sentiment and feeling than formerly, will these persons continue in her fellowship? If they do, their sun must set in blackness. I would say to all anti-slavery Methodists, into whose hands this tract may fall, the time for decisive action has at length come. You were first promised deliverance from your sinful connections with slaveholders, by the General Conference of 1844; and secondly by the Louisville Convention; both are over, and your position is far worse than it was before they first met; you are not only connected with slavery in the very way you formerly were, but belong to a church whose ministers are bound by a solemn covenant never to preach the Gospel to the slaves of five-sixths of the United States; and all your influence and support must go to support both of these great wrongs. Can you continue any longer in connection with slavery? Can you continue in such a connection and be guiltless before God? You cannot; you know you cannot; your own heart tells you you cannot. You must come out; you must obey God, if you have to do as Abraham did when he left his kindred; you must obey God or perish. To you, my dear brethren, this is an awful subject, and I feel un-

utterable things while I write. May the gracious and merciful Saviour give you grace and power to do right, and to do it at the right time, the only time it can be done, is the sincere prayer of the writer.

# THOUGHTS UPON SLAVERY.

BY THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, A. M. 1703-91

[The following was written and published in the year 1774. It will, therefore, probably be admitted, that Mr. Wesley was an "old fashioned abolitionist;" but how far he differed from those of his followers, who are now proscribed, and denounced as "modern abolitionists," the reader can judge.

And here one might ask, if our opponents of the present age are "old fashioned abolitionists," as some of them would have us believe, why do they not circulate this tract, and thus spread their views? If they agree with Wesley, and others who lived and labored with him sixty years ago, why are they so unwilling that this tract should be circulated among Christians at the present time? Nay, why do they refuse to aid others in dispersing it through this nation, as Wesley himself dispersed it to every part of England, thirteen years after it was written? This we learn from the following letter:—

*To Mr. Thomas Funnell.*

NOVEMBER, 24, 1787.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Whatever assistance I can give those generous men who join to oppose that execrable trade, I certainly shall give. I have printed a large edition of the "Thoughts on Slavery," and dispersed them to every part of England. But there will be vehement opposition made, both by slave merchants and slaveholders; and they are mighty men: but our comfort is, He that dwelleth on high is mightier. I am

Your affectionate brother,

JOHN WESLEY

Let those who have doubts about the identity of Wesleyan Methodism, and what they are pleased to denounce as "modern abolitionism," prayerfully read the following pages; they may then be prepared to say who have left the ancient landmarks.]

## SLAVERY.

I. 1. By Slavery, I mean domestic slavery, or that of a servant to a master. A late ingenious writer well observes, "The variety of forms in which slavery appears, makes it almost impossible to convey a just notion of it, by way of definition. There are, however, certain properties which have accompanied slavery in most places, whereby it is easily distinguished from that mild domestic service, which obtains in our country." (See Mr. Hargrave's Plea for Somerset, the Negro.)

2. Slavery imports an obligation of perpetual service, an obligation which only the consent of the master can dissolve. Neither in some countries can the master himself dissolve it, without the consent of judges appointed by the law. It generally gives the master an arbitrary power of any correction not affecting life or limb. Sometimes even these are exposed to his will, or protected only by a fine, or some slight punishment, too inconsiderable to restrain a master of a harsh temper. It creates an incapacity of acquiring any thing, except for the master's benefit. It allows the master to alienate the slave, in the same manner as his cows and horses. Lastly, it descends, in its full extent from parent to child, even to the last generation.

3. The beginning of this may be dated from the remotest period of which we have an account in history. It commenced in the barbarous state of

society, and in process of time spread into all nations. It prevailed particularly among the Jews, the Greeks, the Romans, and the ancient Germans; and was transmitted by them to the various kingdoms and states which arose out of the Roman empire. But after Christianity prevailed, it gradually fell into decline in almost all parts of Europe. This great change began in Spain about the end of the eighth century; and was become general in most other kingdoms of Europe, before the middle of the fourteenth.

4. From this time slavery was nearly extinct till the commencement of the sixteenth century, when the discovery of America, and of the western and eastern coasts of Africa, gave occasion to the revival of it. It took its rise from the Portuguese, who, to supply the Spaniards with men to cultivate their new possessions in America, procured negroes from Africa, whom they sold for slaves to the American Spaniards. This began in the year 1508, when they imported the first negroes into Hispaniola. In 1540, Charles the Fifth, then king of Spain, determined to put an end to negro slavery; giving positive orders that all the negro slaves in the Spanish dominions should be set free. And this was accordingly done by Lagasca, whom he sent and empowered to free them all on condition of continuing to labor for their masters. But soon after Lagasca returned to Spain, slavery returned and flourished as before. Afterward, other nations, as they acquired

possessions in America, followed the example of the Spaniards; and slavery has taken deep root in most of our American colonies.

II. Such is the nature of slavery; such the beginning of negro slavery in America. But some may desire to know what kind of country it is from which the negroes are brought; what sort of men, of what temper and behavior are they in their own country; and in what manner they are generally procured, carried to, and treated, in America.

1. And, First, what kind of country is that from whence they are brought? Is it so remarkably horrid, dreary and barren, that it is a kindness to deliver them out of it? I believe many have apprehended so; but it is an entire mistake, if we may give credit to those who have lived many years therein, and could have no motive to misrepresent it.

2. That part of Africa whence the negroes are brought, commonly known by the name of Guinea, extends along the coasts, in the whole, between three and four thousand miles. From the river Senegal, seventeen degrees north of the line, to Cape Sierra Leone, it contains seven hundred miles. Thence it runs eastward about fifteen hundred miles, including the Grain Coast, the Ivory Coast, the Gold Coast, and the Slave Coast, with the large kingdom of Benin. From thence it runs southward, about twelve hundred miles, and contains the kingdoms of Congo and Angola.

3. Concerning the first, the Senegal Coast, Monsieur Brue, who lived there sixteen years, after describing its fruitfulness near the sea, says, "The farther you go from the sea, the more fruitful and well-improved is the country, abounding in pulse, Indian corn, and various fruits. Here are vast meadows, which feed large herds of great and small cattle; and the villages, which lie thick, show the country is well peopled." And again: "I was surprised to see the land so well cultivated: scarce a spot lay unimproved; the low lands, divided by small canals, were all sowed with rice; the higher grounds planted with Indian corn, and peas of different sorts. Their beef is excellent; poultry plenty, and very cheap, as are all the necessaries of life."

4. As to the Grain and Ivory Coasts, we learn from eye witnesses, that the soil is in general fertile, producing abundance of rice and roots. Indigo and cotton thrive without cultivation; fish is in great plenty; the flocks and herds are numerous, and the trees laden with fruit.

5. The Gold Coast and Slave Coast, all who have seen it agree, is exceedingly fruitful and pleasant, producing vast quantities of rice and other grain, plenty of fruit and roots, palm wine and oil, and fish in great abundance, with much tame and wild cattle. The very same account is given us of the soil and produce of the kingdoms of Benin, Congo, and Angola. \*From all



which it appears, that Guinea, in general, is far from a horrid, dreary, barren country—is one of the most fruitful, as well as the most pleasant countries in the known world. It is said indeed to be unhealthy; and so it is to strangers, but perfectly healthy to the native inhabitants.

6. Such is the country from which the negroes are brought. We come next to inquire what sort of men they are, of what temper and behavior, not in our plantations, but in their native country. And here likewise the surest way is to take our account from eye and ear witnesses. Now, those who have lived in the Senegal country observe, it is inhabited by three nations, the Jalofs, Fulis, and Mandingos. The king of the Jalofs has under him several ministers, who assist in the exercise of justice. The chief justice goes in circuit through all his dominions, to hear complaints and determine controversies; and the viceroy goes with him, to inspect the behavior of the alkadi, or governor of each village. The Fulis are governed by their chief men, who rule with much moderation. Few of them will drink anything stronger than water, being strict Mohammedans. The government is easy, because the people are of a quiet and good disposition, and so well instructed in what is right, that a man who wrongs another is the abomination of all. They desire no more land than they use, which they cultivate with great care and industry; if any of them are known to be made slaves by the white

men, they all join to redeem them. They not only support all that are old, or blind, or lame among themselves, but have frequently supplied the necessities of the Mandingos, when they were distressed by famine.

7. "The Mandingos," says Monsieur Brue, "are rigid Mohammedans, drinking neither wine nor brandy. They are industrious and laborious, keeping their ground well cultivated, and breeding a good stock of cattle. Every town has a governor, and he appoints the labor of the people. The men work the ground designed for corn; the women and girls, the rice ground. He afterwards divides the corn and rice among them; and decides all quarrels, if any arise. All the Mohammedan negroes constantly go to public prayers thrice a day; there being a priest in every village, who regularly calls them together; and it is surprising to see the modesty, attention, and reverence which they observe during their worship. These three nations practice several trades; they have smiths, saddlers, potters, and weavers; and they are very ingenious at their several occupations. Their smiths not only make all the instruments of iron which they have occasion to use, but likewise work many things neatly in gold and silver. It is chiefly the women and children who weave fine cotton cloth, which they dye blue and black."

8. It was of these parts of Guinea that Monsieur Allanson, correspondent of the Royal Academy of

Sciences at Paris, from 1749 to 1753, gives the following account, both as to the country and people:—"Which way soever I turned my eyes, I beheld a perfect image of pure nature: an agreeable solitude, bounded on every side by a charming landscape; the rural situation of cottages in the midst of trees; the ease and quietness of the negroes, reclined under the shade of the spreading foliage, with the simplicity of their dress and manners; the whole revived in my mind the idea of our first parents, and I seemed to contemplate the world in its primitive state. They are, generally speaking, very good-natured, sociable, and obliging. I was not a little pleased with my very first reception; and it fully convinced me, that there ought to be a considerable abatement made in the accounts we have of the savage character of the Africans." He adds: "It is amazing that an illiterate people should reason so pertinently concerning the heavenly bodies. There is no doubt, but that, with proper instruments, they would become excellent astronomers."

9. The inhabitants of the Grain and Ivory Coast are represented by those that deal with them, as sensible, courteous, and the fairest traders on the coasts of Guinea. They rarely drink to excess; if any do, they are severely punished by the king's order. They are seldom troubled with war; if a difference happen between two nations, they commonly end the dispute amicably.

The inhabitants of the Gold and Slave Coast, likewise, when they are not artfully incensed against each other, live in great union and friendship, being generally well tempered, civil, tractable, and ready to help any that need it. In particular, the natives of the kingdom of Whidah are civil, kind, and obliging, to strangers; and they are the most gentleman-like of all the negroes abounding in good manners toward each other. The inferiors pay the utmost respect to their superiors; so wives to their husbands, children to their parents. And they are remarkably industrious; all are constantly employed,—the men in agriculture, the women in spinning and weaving cotton.

10. The Gold and Slave Coasts are divided into several districts, some governed by kings, others by the principal men, who take care each of their own town or village, and prevent or appease tumults. They punish murder and adultery severely; very frequently with death. Theft and robbery are punished by a fine proportionable to the goods that were taken. All the natives of this coast, though Heathens, believe there is one God, the Author of them and all things. They appear likewise to have a confused apprehension of a future state. And, accordingly, every town and village has a place of public worship. It is remarkable that they have no beggars among them; such is the care of the chief men, in every city and village, to provide some easy labor even for

the old and weak. Some are employed in blowing the smith's bellows ; others in pressing palm oil ; others in grinding of colors. If they are too weak even for this, they sell provisions in the market.

11. The natives of the kingdom of Benin are a reasonable and good-natured people. They are sincere and inoffensive, and do no injustice either to one another or to strangers. They are eminently civil and courteous ; if you make them a present, they endeavor to repay it double ; and if they are trusted till the ship returns the next year, they are sure honestly to pay the whole debt. Theft is punished among them, although not with the same severity as murder. If a man and woman of any quality are taken in adultery, they are certain to be put to death, and their bodies thrown on a dunghill, and left a prey to wild beasts. They are punctually just and honest in their dealings ; and are also very charitable, the king and the great lords taking care to employ all that are capable of any work. And those that are utterly helpless they keep for God's sake ; so that here also are no beggars. The inhabitants of Congo and Angola are generally a quiet people. They discover a good understanding, and behave in a friendly manner to strangers, being of a mild temper and an affable carriage. Upon the whole, therefore, the negroes who inhabit the coast of Africa, from the river Senegal to the southern bounds of Angola,

are so far from being the stupid, senseless, brutish, lazy barbarians, the fierce, cruel, perfidious savages they have been described, that, on the contrary, they are represented, by those who have no motive to flatter them, as remarkably sensible, considering the few advantages they have for improving their understanding; as industrious to the highest degree, perhaps more so than any other natives of so warm a climate; as fair, just, and honest in all their dealings, unless where white men have taught them to be otherwise; and as far more mild, friendly, and kind to strangers, than any of our forefathers were. *Our forefathers?* Where shall we find at this day, among the fair-faced natives of Europe, a nation generally practicing the justice, mercy, and truth, which are found among these poor Africans? Suppose the preceding accounts are true (which I see no reason or pretence to doubt of), and we may leave England and France, to seek genuine honesty in Benin, Congo, or Angola.

III. We have now seen what kind of country it is from which the negroes are brought; and what sort of men (even white men being the judges) they were in their own country. Inquire we, Thirdly, in what manner are they generally procured, carried to, and treated, in America?

1. First. In what manner are they procured? Part of them by fraud. Captains of ships, from time to time, have invited negroes to come on board, and then carried them away. But far

more have been procured by force. The Christians, landing upon their coasts, seized as many as they found—men, women, and children—and transported them to America. It was about 1551 that the English began trading to Guinea; at first, for gold and elephant's teeth, but soon after for men. In 1556, Sir John Hawkins sailed with two ships to Cape Verd, where he sent eighty men on shore to catch negroes. But the natives flying, they fell farther down, and there set the men on shore, "to burn their towns and take the inhabitants." But they met with such resistance, that they had seven men killed, and took but ten negroes. So they went still farther down, till, having taken enough, they proceeded to the West Indies and sold them.

2. It was some time before the Europeans found a more compendious way of procuring African slaves, by prevailing upon them to make war upon each other, and to sell their prisoners. Till then they seldom had any wars; but were in general quiet and peaceable. But the white men first taught them drunkenness and avarice, and then hired them to sell one another. Nay, by this means, even their kings are induced to sell their own subjects. So Mr. Moore, factor of the African Company in 1730, informs us: "When the king of Barsalli wants goods or brandy, he sends to the English governor at James' Fort, who immediately sends a sloop. Against the time it arrives, he plunders some of his neighbors' towns,

selling the people for the goods he wants. At other times, he falls upon one of his own towns, and makes bold to sell his own subjects." So Monsieur Brue says, "I wrote to the king" (not the same), "if he had a sufficient number of slaves, I would treat with him." He seized three hundred of his own people, and sent word he was ready to deliver them for the goods." He adds, "Some of the natives are always ready" (when well paid) "to surprise and carry off their own countrymen. They come at night without noise, and if they find any lone cottage, surround it, and carry off all the people." Barbot, another French factor says, "Many of the slaves sold by the negroes are prisoners of war, or taken in the incursions they make into the enemies' territories. Others are stolen. Abundance of little blacks, of both sexes, are stolen away by their neighbors, when found abroad on the road, or in the woods, or else in the corn fields, at the time of the year when their parents keep them there all day to scare away the devouring birds." That their own parents sell them is utterly false: whites, not blacks, are without natural affection!

3. To set the manner wherein negroes are procured in a yet stronger light, it will suffice to give an extract of "Two voyages to Guinea" on this account. The first is taken verbatim from the original manuscript of the surgeon's journal:—

"Sestro, Dec. 29, 1724.—No trade to-day, thought



many traders came on board. They informed us, that the people are gone to war within land, and will bring prisoners enough in two or three days; in hopes of which we stay.

“The 30th.—No trade yet; but our traders came on board to-day, and informed us the people had burnt four towns; so that to-morrow we expect slaves off.

“The 31st.—Fair weather; but no trading yet. We see each night towns burning. But we hear many of the Sestro men are killed by the inland negroes; so that we fear this war will be unsuccessful.

“The 2d of January.—Last night we saw a prodigious fire break out about eleven o'clock, and this morning see the town of Sestro burned down to the ground.” (It contained some hundred houses.) “So that we find their enemies are too hard for them at present, and consequently our trade spoiled here. Therefore about seven o'clock we weighed anchor, to proceed lower down.”

4. The second extract, taken from the journal of a surgeon, who went from New York on the same trade, is as follows: “The commander of the vessel sent to acquaint the king, that he wanted a cargo of slaves. The king promised to furnish him; and in order to it, set out, designing to surprise some town, and make all the people prisoners. Some time after, the king sent him word, he had not yet met with the desired success; having attempted to break up two towns,

but having been twice repulsed ; but that he still hoped to procure the number of slaves. In this design he persisted, till he met his enemies in the field. A battle was fought which lasted three days. And the engagement was so bloody, that four thousand five hundred men were slain upon the spot." Such is the manner wherein the negroes are procured ! Thus the Christians preach the Gospel to the Heathens !

5. Thus they are procured. But in what numbers and in what manner are they carried to America ? Mr. Anderson, in his History of Trade and Commerce, observes : " England supplies her American colonies with negro slaves, amounting in number to about a hundred thousand every year ;" that is, so many are taken on board our ships ; but at least ten thousand of them die in the voyage ; about a fourth part more die at the different islands, in what is called the seasoning. So that at an average, in the passage and seasoning together, thirty thousand die ; that is, properly, are murdered. O earth, O sea, cover not thou their blood !

6. When they are brought down to the shore in order to be sold, our surgeons thoroughly examine them, and that quite naked, women and men, without any distinction ; those that are approved are set on one side. In the mean time, a burning iron, with the arms or name of the company, lies in the fire, with which they are marked on the breast. Before they are put into the ships,

their masters strip them of all they have on their backs : so that they come on board stark naked, women as well as men. It is common for several hundred of them to be put on board one vessel, where they are stowed together in as little room as it is possible for them to be crowded. It is easy to suppose what a condition they must soon be in, between heat, thirst, and stench of various kinds. So that it is no wonder, so many should die in the passage ; but rather, that any survive it.

7. When the vessels arrive at their destined port, the negroes are again exposed naked to the eyes of all that flock together, and the examination of their purchasers. Then they are separated to the plantations of their several masters, to see each other no more. Here you may see mothers hanging over their daughters, bedewing their naked breasts with tears, and daughters clinging to their parents, till the whipper soon obliges them to part.\* And what can be more wretched than the condition they then enter upon ? Banished from their country, from their friends and relations for ever, from every comfort of life, they are reduced to a state scarce any way preferable to that of beasts of burden. In general, a few

\* These scenes occur almost daily at the present time in the United States, in the prosecution of the domestic slave trade. It is estimated that Virginia alone exports to the Southern and Western markets TEN THOUSAND SLAVES annually. Reader, judge of the anguish and tears this must cause.—*Pub. Committee.*

roots, not of the nicest kind, usually yams or potatoes, are their food ; and two rags, that neither screen them from the heat of the day, nor the cold of the night, their covering. Their sleep is very short, their labor continual, and frequently above their strength ; so that death sets many of them at liberty before they have lived out half their days. The time they work in the West Indies, is from day break to noon, and from two o'clock till dark ; during which time they are attended by overseers, who, if they think them dilatory, or think any thing not so well done as it should be, whip them most unmercifully, so that you may see their bodies long after pealed and scarred usually from the shoulders to the waist. And before they are suffered to go to their quarters, they have commonly something to do, as collecting herbage for the horses, or gathering fuel for the boilers ; so that it is often past twelve before they can get home. Hence if their food is not prepared, they are sometimes called to labor again, before they can satisfy their hunger. And no excuse will avail. If they are not in the field immediately they must expect to feel the lash. Did the Creator intend that the noblest creatures in the visible world should live such a life as this ?

Are these thy glorious work, Parent of good ?

8. As to the punishments inflicted on them, says Sir Hans Sloane, "they frequently geld them,

or chop off half a foot: after they are whipped till they are raw all over, some put pepper and salt upon them; some drop melted wax upon their skin; others cut off their ears, and constrain them to broil and eat them. For rebellion" (that is, asserting their native liberty, which they have as much right to as to the air they breathe), "they fasten them down to the ground with crooked sticks on every limb, and then applying fire, by degrees, to the feet and hands, they burn them gradually upward to the head."

9. But will not the laws made in the plantations prevent or redress all cruelty and oppression? We will take but a few of those laws for a specimen, and then let any man judge.

In order to rivet the chain of slavery, the law of Virginia ordains: "That no slave shall be set free under any pretence whatever, except for some meritorious services, to be adjudged and allowed by the governor and council; and that where any slave shall be set free by his owner, otherwise than is herein directed, the churchwardens of the parish, wherein such negroes shall reside for the space of one month, are hereby authorized and required to take up and sell the said negro by public outcry."

10. Will not these lawgivers take effectual care to prevent cruelty and oppression?

The law of Jamaica ordains: "Every slave that shall run away, and continue absent from his master twelve months, shall be deemed rebel-

lions." And by another law fifty pounds are allowed to those who kill or bring in alive a rebellious slave. So their law treats these poor men with as little ceremony and consideration, as if they were merely brute beasts! But the innocent blood which is shed in consequence of such a detestable law, must call for vengeance on the murderous abettors and actors of such deliberate wickedness.

11. But the law of Barbadoes exceeds even this: "If any negro under punishment, by his master, or his order, for running away or any other crime or misdemeanor, shall suffer in life or member, no person whatsoever shall be liable to any fine therefor. But if any man, of wantonness, or only of bloody-mindedness, or cruel intention, wilfully kill a negro of his own," (now, observe the severe punishment!) "he shall pay into the public treasury fifteen pounds sterling! and not be liable to any other punishment or forfeiture for the same!"

Nearly allied to this is that law of Virginia: "After proclamation is issued against slaves that run away, it is lawful for any person whatsoever to kill and destroy such slaves, by such ways and means as he shall think fit."

We have already seen some of the ways and means which have been thought fit on such occasions; and many more might be mentioned. One gentleman, when I was abroad, thought fit to roast his slave alive! But if the most natural

act of "running away" from intolerable tyranny, deserves such relentless severity, what punishment have these lawmakers to expect hereafter, on account of their own enormous offences?

IV. 1. This is the plain unaggravated matter of fact. Such is the manner wherein our African slaves are procured; such the manner wherein they are removed from their native land, and wherein they are treated in our plantations. I would now inquire whether these things can be defended, on the principle of even Heathen honesty; whether they can be reconciled (setting the Bible out of the question) with any degree of either justice or mercy.

2. The grand plea is, "They are authorized by law." But can law, human law, change the nature of things? Can it turn darkness into light, or evil into good? By no means. *Notwithstanding ten thousand laws, right is right, and wrong is wrong still.* There must still remain an essential difference between justice and injustice, cruelty and mercy. So that I still ask, Who can reconcile this treatment of the negroes, first and last with either mercy or justice?

Where is the justice of inflicting the severest evils on those that have done us no wrong? of depriving those that never injured us in word or deed, of every comfort of life? of tearing them from their native country, and depriving them of liberty itself, of which an Angolan has the same natural right as an Englishman, and on which he

sets as high a value? Yea, where is the justice of taking away the lives of innocent, inoffensive men; murdering thousands of them in their own land, by the hands of their own countrymen; many thousands, year after year, on shipboard, and then casting them like dung into the sea; and tens of thousands in that cruel slavery to which they are so unjustly reduced?

3. But waiving, for the present, all other considerations, I strike at the root of this complicated villainy, *I absolutely deny all slaveholding to be consistent with any degree of natural justice.*

I cannot place this in a clearer light than that great ornament of his profession, Judge Blackstone, has already done. Part of his words are as follows:

“The three origins of the right of slavery assigned by Justinian, are all built upon false foundations: (1.) Slavery is said to arise from captivity in war. The conqueror having a right to the life of his captive, if he spares that, has then a right to deal with him as he pleases. But this is untrue, if taken generally,—that, by the laws of nations, a man has a right to kill his enemy. He has only a right to kill him in particular cases, in cases of absolute necessity for self-defence. And it is plain, this absolute necessity did not subsist, since he did not kill him, but made him prisoner. War itself is justifiable only on principles of self-preservation: therefore it gives us no right over prisoners, but to hinder their hurting us by confining them. Much less can it give a right to torture, or kill, or even to enslave an enemy when the war is over. Since therefore the right of making our prisoners slaves, depends on a supposed right of slaughter, that foundation failing, the consequence which is drawn from it, must fail likewise.

“It is said, secondly, slavery may begin by one man’s



selling himself to another. And it is true, a man may sell himself to work for another ; but he cannot sell himself to be a slave, as above defined. Every sale implies an equivalent given to the seller, in lieu of what he transfers to the buyer. But what equivalent can be given for life or liberty ? His property likewise, with the very price which he seems to receive, devolves *ipso facto* to his master, the instant he becomes his slave : in this case, therefore, the buyer gives nothing, and the seller receives nothing. Of what validity then, can a sale be, which destroys the very principles upon which all sales are founded ?

“ We are told, thirdly, that men may be born slaves,\* by being the children of slaves. But this, being built upon the two former rights, must fall together with them. If neither captivity nor contract can, by the plain law of nature and reason, reduce the parent to a state of slavery, much less can they reduce the offspring.” It clearly follows, that all slavery is as irreconcilable to justice as to mercy.

4. That slaveholding is utterly inconsistent with mercy, is almost too plain to need a proof. Indeed, it is said, “ that these negroes being prisoners of war, our captains and factors buy them, merely to save them from being put to death. And is this not mercy ?” I answer, (1.) Did Sir John Hawkins, and many others, seize upon men, women, and children, who were at peace in their own fields or houses, merely to save them from death ? (2.) Was it to save them from death, that they knocked out the brains of those they could not bring away ? (3.) Who occasioned and fomented those wars, wherein these poor creatures were taken prisoners ? Who excited them by

\* See our Declaration of Independence.

money, by drink, by every possible means, to fall upon one another? Was it not themselves? They know in their own conscience it was, if they have any conscience left. But (4.) to bring the matter to a short issue, can they say before God, that they ever took a single voyage, or bought a single negro, from this motive? They cannot; they well know, to get money, not to save lives was the whole and sole-spring of their motions.

5. But if this manner of procuring and treating negroes is not consistent either with mercy or justice, yet there is a plea for it which every man of business will acknowledge to be quite sufficient. Fifty years ago, one meeting an eminent statesman in the lobby of the house of commons said, "You have been long talking about justice and equity. Pray which is this bill, equity or justice? He answered very short and plain, "D—n justice; it is necessity." Here also the slaveholder fixes his foot; here he rests the strength of his cause. "If it is not quite right, yet it must be so; there is an absolute necessity for it. It is necessary we should procure slaves; and when we have procured them, it is necessary to use them with severity, considering their stupidity, stubbornness and wickedness."

I answer, you stumble at the threshold; I deny that villainy is ever necessary. It is impossible that it should ever be necessary for any reasonable creature to violate all the laws of justice,

mercy, and truth. No circumstances can make it necessary for a man to burst in sunder all the ties of humanity. It can never be necessary for a rational being to sink himself below a brute. A man can be under no necessity of degrading himself into a wolf. The absurdity of the supposition is so glaring, that one would wonder any one can help seeing it.

6. This in general. But to be more particular, I ask, First, what is necessary? and, Secondly, To what end? It may be answered, "The whole method now used by the original purchasers of negroes is necessary to the furnishing our colonies yearly with a hundred thousand slaves." I grant, this is necessary to that end. But how is that end necessary? How will you prove it necessary that one hundred, that one, of those slaves should be procured? "Why, it is necessary to my gaining a hundred thousand pounds." Perhaps so; but how is this necessary? It is very possible you might be both a better and happier man, if you had not a quarter of it. I deny that your gaining one thousand is necessary either to your present or eternal happiness. "But, however, you must allow, these slaves are necessary for the cultivation of our islands; inasmuch as white men are not able to labor in hot climates." I answer, First, *It were better that all those islands should remain uncultivated for ever; yet, it were more desirable that they were altogether sunk in the depth of the sea, than that they should be cultivated at so high a*

*price as the violation of justice, mercy, and truth.* But, Secondly, the supposition on which you ground your argument is false. For white men, even Englishmen, are well able to labor in hot climates; provided they are temperate both in meat and drink, and that they inure themselves to it by degrees. I speak no more than I know by experience. It appears from the thermometer, that the summer heat in Georgia is frequently equal to that in Barbadoes, yea, to that under the line. And yet I and my family (eight in number) did employ all our spare time there, in felling of trees and clearing of ground, as hard labor as any negro need be employed in. The German family likewise, forty in number, were employed in all manner of labor. And this was so far from impairing our health, that we all continued perfectly well, while the idle ones round about us were swept away as with a petilence. It is not true, therefore, that white men are not able to labor, even in hot climates, full as well as black. *But if they were not, it would be better that none should labor there, that the work should be left undone, than that myriads of innocent men should be murdered, and myriads more dragged into the basest slavery.*

7. "But the furnishing us with slaves is necessary for the trade, and wealth, and glory of our nation." Here are several mistakes. For, First, wealth is not necessary to the glory of any nation; but wisdom, virtue, justice, mercy, generosity, public spirit, love of our country. These are ne-

cessary to the real glory of a nation ; but abundance of wealth is not. Men of understanding allow that the glory of England was full as high in Queen Elizabeth's time as it is now ; although our riches and trade were then as much smaller, as our virtue was greater. But, Secondly, it is not clear that we should have either less money or trade (only less of that detestable trade of man-stealing), if there was not a negro in all our islands, or in all English America. It is demonstrable, white men, inured to it by degrees, can work as well as them ; and they would do it, were negroes out of the way, and proper encouragement given them. However, Thirdly, I come back to the same point. Better no trade than trade procured by villainy. It is far better to have no wealth, than to gain wealth at the expense of virtue. *Better is honest poverty, than all the riches bought by the tears, and sweat, and blood of our fellow-creatures.*

8. " However this be, it is necessary, when we have slaves, to use them with severity." What, to whip them for every petty offence, till they are all in gore blood ? To take that opportunity of rubbing pepper and salt into their raw flesh ? to drop burning sealing wax upon their skin ? to castrate them ? to cut off half their foot with an axe ? to hang them on gibbets, that they may die by inches, with heat, and hunger, and thirst ? to pin them down to the ground, and then burn them by degrees from the feet to the head ? to roast

them alive ? When did a Turk or a Heathen find it necessary to use a fellow-creature thus ?

I pray, to what end is this usage necessary ? “Why, to prevent their running away ; and to keep them constantly to their labor, that they may not idle away their time : So miserably stupid is this race of men, yea, so stubborn and so wicked.” Allowing them to be as stupid as you say, to whom is that stupidity owing ? Without question, it lies altogether at the door of their inhuman masters ; who give them no means, no opportunity, of improving their understanding ; and, indeed, leave them no motive, either from hope or fear, to attempt any such thing. They were no way remarkable for stupidity, while they remained in their own country. The inhabitants of Africa, where they have equal motives and equal means of improvement, are not inferior to the inhabitants of Europe ; to some of them they are greatly superior. Impartially survey in their own country, the natives of Benin, and the natives of Lapland ; compare (setting prejudice aside) the Samoeids and the Angolans ; and on which side does the advantage lie in point of understanding ? Certainly the African is in no respect inferior to the European. Their stupidity, therefore, in our plantations is not natural ; otherwise than it is the natural effect of their condition. Consequently, it is not their fault, but yours. You must answer for it, before God and man.

9. “But their stupidity is not the only reason

of our treating them with severity. For it is hard to say, which is the greatest this or their stubbornness and wickedness." It may be so : but do not these, as well as the other, lie at your door ? Are not stubbornness, cunning, pilfering, and divers other vices, the natural, necessary fruits of slavery ? Is not this an observation which has been made in every age and nation ? And what means have you used to remove this stubbornness ? Have you tried what mildness and gentleness would do ? I knew one that did ; that had prudence and patience to make the experiment ; Mr. Hugh Bryan, who then lived on the borders of South Carolina. And what was the effect ? Why, that all his negroes (and he had no small number of them), loved and revered him as a father, and cheerfully obeyed him out of love. Yea, they were more afraid of a frown from him, than of many blows from an overseer. And what pains have you taken, what methods have you used, to reclaim them from their wickedness ? Have you carefully taught them that there is a God, a wise, powerful, merciful Being, the Creator and Governor of heaven and earth ? that he has appointed a day wherein he will judge the world ; will take an account of all our thoughts, words, and actions ? that in that day he will reward every child of man according to his works ? that then the righteous shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world ; and the wicked shall be cast into ever-

lasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels? If you have not done this, if you have taken no pains or thought about the matter, can you wonder at their wickedness? What wonder if they should cut your throat? And if they did, whom could you thank for it but yourself? *You first acted the villain in making them slaves, whether you stole them or bought them.* You kept them stupid and wicked, by cutting them off from all opportunities of improving either in knowledge or virtue! and now you assign their want of wisdom and goodness as the reason for using them worse than brute beasts!

V. 1. It remains only to make a little application of the preceding observations. But to whom should that application be made? That may bear a question. Should we address ourselves to the public at large? What effect can this have? It may inflame the world against the guilty, but is not likely to remove that guilt. Should we appeal to the English nation in general? This also is striking wide; and is never likely to procure any redress for the sore evil we complain of. As little would it in all probability avail, to apply to the parliament. So many things, which seem of greater importance, lie before them, that they are not likely to attend to this. I therefore add a few words to those who are more immediately concerned, whether captains, merchants, or planters.

2. And, First, to the captains employed in this trade. Most of you know the country of Guinea



several parts of it, at least, between the river Senegal and the kingdom of Angola. Perhaps, now, by your means part of it is become a dreary, uncultivated wilderness, the inhabitants being all murdered or carried away, so that there are none left to till the ground. But you well know how populous, how fruitful, how pleasant it was a few years ago. You know, the people were not stupid, not wanting in sense, considering the few means of improvement they enjoyed. Neither did you find them savage, fierce, cruel, treacherous, or unkind to strangers. On the contrary, they were, in most parts, a sensible and ingenious people. They were kind and friendly, courteous and obliging, and remarkably fair and just in their dealings. Such are the men whom you hire their own countrymen to tear away from this lovely country; part by stealth, part by force, part made captives in those wars which you raise or foment on purpose. You have seen them torn away,—children from their parents, parents from their children; husbands from their wives, wives from their beloved husbands, brethren and sisters from each other. You have dragged them who had never done you any wrong, perhaps in chains, from their native shore. You have forced them into your ships like a herd of swine,—them who had souls immortal as your own; only some of them leaped into the sea, and resolutely stayed under water, till they could suffer no more from you. You have stowed them together as close as

ever they could lie, without any regard either to decency, or convenience. And when many of them had been poisoned by foul air, or had sunk under various hardships, you have seen their remains delivered to the deep, till the sea should give up his dead. You have carried the survivors into the vilest slavery, never to end but with life; such slavery as is not found among the Turks at Algiers, no, nor among the Heathens in America.

3. May I speak plainly to you? I must. Love constrains me; love to you, as well as to those you are concerned with.

Is there a God? You know there is. Is he a just God? Then there must be a state of retribution; a state wherein the just God will reward every man according to his works. Then what reward will he render to you? O think, betimes! before you drop into eternity! Think now, "He shall have judgment without mercy that showed no mercy."

Are you a man? Then you should have a human heart. But have you indeed? What is your heart made of? Is there no such principle as compassion there? Do you never feel another's pain? Have you no sympathy, no sense of human woe, no pity for the miserable? When you saw the flowing eyes, the heaving breasts, or the bleeding sides and tortured limbs of your fellow creatures, was you a stone, or a brute? Did you look upon them with the eyes of a tiger? When you squeezed the agonizing creatures

down in the ship, or when you threw their poor mangled remains into the sea, had you no relenting? Did not one tear drop from your eye, one sigh escape your breast? Do you feel no relenting now? If you do not, you must go on, till the measure of your iniquities is full. Then will the great God deal with you as you have dealt with them, and require all their blood at your hands. And at "that day it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for you!" But if your heart does relent, though in a small degree, know it is a call from the God of love. And "to-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart." To-day resolve, God being your helper, to escape for your life. Regard not money! All that a man hath will he give for his life! Whatever you lose, lose not your soul: nothing can countervail that loss. Immediately quit the horrid trade; at all events, be an honest man.

4. This equally concerns every merchant who is engaged in the slave trade. It is you that induce the African villain to sell his countrymen; in order thereto, to steal, rob, murder men, women, and children, without number, by enabling the English villain to pay him for so doing, whom you overpay for his execrable labor. It is your money that is the spring of all, that empowers him to go on: so that whatever he or the African does in this matter is all your act and deed. And is your conscience quite reconciled to this?

Does it never reproach you at all? Has gold entirely blinded your eyes, and stupified your heart? Can you see, can you feel, no harm therein? Is it doing as you would be done to? Make the case your own. "Master," said a slave at Liverpool to the merchant that owned him, "what, if some of my countrymen were to come here, and take away my mistress, and Master Tommy, and Master Billy, and carry them into our country, and make them slaves, how would you like it? His answer was worthy of a man: "I will never buy a slave more while I live." O let his resolution be yours! Have no more any part in this detestable business. Instantly leave it to those unfeeling wretches, who

Laugh at human nature and compassion!

Be you a man, not a wolf, a devourer of the human species! Be merciful, that you may obtain mercy!

5. And this equally concerns every gentleman that has an estate in our American plantations; yea, all slaveholders, of whatever rank and degree: *seeing men buyers are exactly on a level with men stealers.* Indeed you say, "I pay honestly for my goods; and I am not concerned to know how they are come by." Nay, but you are; you are deeply concerned to know they are honestly come by. Otherwise you are a partaker with a thief, and not a jot honestier than him. But you know they are not honestly come by; you know they are procured by means nothing near so

innocent as picking of pockets, house breaking, or robbery upon the highway. You know they are procured by a deliberate series of more complicated villainy (of fraud, robbery, and murder) than was ever practiced either by Mohammedans or Pagans; in particular, by murders, of all kinds: by the blood of the innocent poured upon the ground like water. Now, it is your money that pays the merchant, and through him the captain and the African butchers. You therefore are guilty, yea, principally guilty, of all these frauds, robberies, and murders. You are the spring that puts all the rest in motion; they would not stir a step without you; therefore the blood of all these wretches who die before their time, whether in their country or elsewhere, lies upon your head. "The blood of thy brother" (for, whether thou wilt believe it or no, such he is in the sight of Him that made him) crieth against thee from the earth," from the ship, and from the waters. O, whatever it costs, put a stop to its cry before it be too late; instantly, at any price, were it the half of your goods, deliver thyself from blood-guiltiness! Thy hands, thy bed, thy furniture, thy house, thy lands, are at present stained with blood. Surely it is enough, accumulate no more guilt; spill no more the blood of the innocent! Do not hire another to shed blood; do not pay him for doing it! Whether you are a Christian or no, show yourself

a man! Be not more savage than a lion or a bear.

6. Perhaps you will say, "I do not buy any negroes; I only use those left me by my father." So far is well; but is it enough to satisfy your own conscience? *Had your father, have you, has any man living, a right to use another as a slave? It cannot be, even setting Revelation aside.* It cannot be, that either war, or contract, can give any man such a property in another as he has in his sheep and oxen. Much less is it possible that any child of man should ever be born a slave. Liberty is the right of every human creature; as soon as he breathes the vital air; *and no human law can deprive him of that right which he derives from the law of nature.*

If, therefore, you have any regard to justice (to say nothing of mercy, nor the revealed law of God,) render unto all their due. Give liberty to whom liberty is due, that is, to every child of man, to every partaker of human nature. Let none serve you but by his own act and deed, by his own voluntary choice. Away with all whips, all chains, all compulsion! Be gentle toward all men; and see that you invariably do unto every one as you would he should do unto you.

7. O thou God of love, thou who art loving to every man, and whose mercy is over all thy works; thou who art the Father of the spirits of all flesh, and who art rich in mercy unto all; thou who hast mingled of one blood all the nations up-

on earth; have compassion upon these outcasts of men, who are trodden down as dung upon the earth! Arise, and help these that have no helper, whose blood is spilt upon the ground like water! Are not these also the work of thine own hands, the purchase of thy Son's blood? Stir them up to cry unto thee in the land of their captivity; and let their complaint come up before thee; let it enter into thy ears! Make even those that lead them away captive to pity them, and turn their captivity as the rivers in the south. O burst thou all their chains in sunder; more especially the chains of their sins! Thou Savior of all, make them free, that they may be free indeed!

The servile progeny of Ham  
 Seize as the purchase of thy blood!  
 Let all the Heathens know thy name:  
 From idols to the living God  
 The dark Americans convert,  
 And shine in every Pagan heart!

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London, Feb. 26, 1791.

DEAR SIR,—Unless the Divine power has raised you up to be as *Athanasius contra mundum*, [Athanasius against the world,] I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise, in opposing that execrable villainy, which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But, “if God be for you, who can be against you?” Are all of them together stronger than God? O “be not weary in well doing!” Go on, in the name of God, and in the

power of his might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it.

Reading this morning a tract, wrote by a poor African, I was peculiarly struck by that circumstance,—that a man who has a black skin, being wronged or outraged by a white man, can have no redress; it being a law, in all our colonies, that the oath of a black against a white goes for nothing. What villainy is this?

That He who has guided you from your youth up, may continue to strengthen you in this and all things, is the prayer of, dear sir,

Your affectionate servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

This letter is supposed to have been addressed to Mr. Wilberforce, and, as its date shows, was written by Mr. Wesley only four days before his death.—*Ed. [of the Methodist Book Room.]*



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